Sway
Summer 2007 Free
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Guide to beautiful Barbados inside!
FASHION:
Sweet emancipation
MUSIC:
FEFE DOBSON gets fresh
COMMUNITY:
Regent Park renaissance
PLUS!
Oprah a gangsta?
Interviews:
Eric Jerome Dickey and Nas
Caribana
Still jumpin' up after 40 years

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Time to celebrate

Publisher's Note

RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING special achievers is what community is all about. It's what milestones are made of.

And that's exactly what 2,000 of Toronto's Who's Who came out to do at the 25th anniversary of the Black Business and Professional Association Harry Jerome Awards (see page 51). Together we came out to commemorate, celebrate and honour those who have looked beyond life's hurdles and, in the process, inspired others to succeed.

But a plethora of other anniversaries are fast approaching — and this summer issue of *Sway* has it all covered. Firstly, how thrilling is it that Caribana (our cover story on page 41), the largest Caribbean festival in North America, is 40 years young? When I first came to Canada, Caribana was only nine. Can someone please tell me where the years have gone?

It's really pretty simple why we chose to spotlight Barbados in our first ever travel issue (page 31). Toronto's own Barbados on the Water (at Harbourfront, see page 54) is now riding the wave into its second decade of cultural festivities in true Bajan style.

Of course, we can't talk about anniversaries without mentioning that 2007 is the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade. This issue Afua Cooper weighs in on the legacy of slavery (page 74) and we offer a tongue-in-chic summer fashion spread (page 19) that, at the very least, documents that we are finally masters of our own homes. Speaking of homes, the residential renovation of Regent Park has just begun, but as our story on page 60 shows, the cultural renaissance has been under way for a while.

Also in this issue, we train with the Argonauts and dare to posit that Oprah is a... gangsta? Other interviews include singer Fefe Dobson, bestselling author Eric Jerome Dickey, foodie Rob Rainford, Rhea, Nas, Deborah Cox — and famed Global TV reporter Terese Sears does double duty as a denizen of decor.

There you have it, another jam-packed showcase of success in our community, a perfect read for the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer.

Play hard, but please play safe.

Cheryl

Cheryl Phillips
PUBLISHER

P.S. As always, we want to hear from you. Give us your feedback at **letters@swaymag.ca** and don't forget to visit our website at **www.swaymag.ca.**

Sway

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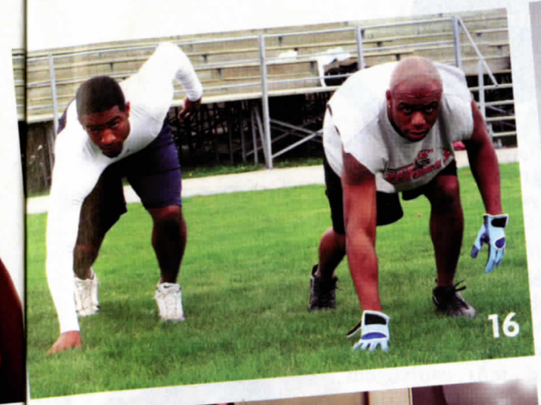
"My day consists of going to casting calls to procure new contracts, communicating with clients, then going to the gym."
— Mykee Selkin CAREERS



"I am inspired by the past — by the ancestors who have gone before and accomplished so much."
—Saron Ghebressellassie
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BEAUTIFUL BARBADOS

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Contributors

MELANIE REFFES is a Montreal-based journalist specializing in all things Caribbean. Her articles have appeared in many publications including *The Globe & Mail*, *FQ*, *Movie Entertainment*, *Canadian Traveller*, *Travel Weekly* and *Modern Agent*. When she's not racing through airports trying to catch an island flight, she's in her backyard garden growing the hottest scotch bonnet peppers this side of Ocho Rios.

TERESE SEARS is a senior reporter at Global Television News. The award-winning journalist is also an avid art collector and has a life-long passion for interior design. Sears is co-owner of the midtown Toronto home decor store AT Design Group, and is researching a book on the history of African Canadian Art.

Beauty editor **GILLIAN DOWNES** began her career in journalism more than 15 years ago. In 2000, she launched www.impossiblediva.com, Canada's first fashion and beauty e-zine for Afro-Canadians. She followed that up with the recent opening of B.Skin (Brownskin) Bath & Beauty, a boutique located in Toronto's King West Village. Gillian hopes to one day write the great Canadian novel.

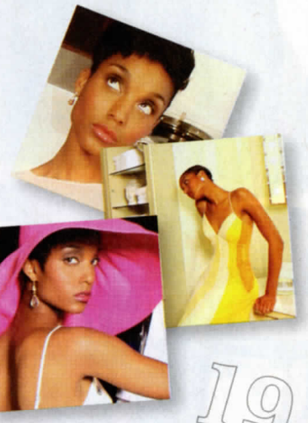
The photography of Toronto-based **MICHAEL CHAMBERS** has been published and exhibited internationally, with images currently on display at The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and The National Gallery of Jamaica. A graduate of York University, his photography has been featured in numerous films and was the subject of Anton Wagner's documentary *The Photographer — An Artist's Journey.*

Fashion stylist **MICHELLE LYTE**'s career began as an assistant on music videos. As her passion for the industry grew, she got involved in such films as *Lie With Me*, *Martin and Lewis* and *Second String*. Today, Michelle is the exclusive stylist for MTV Live on-air personalities. She's lent her expertise to several magazines, advertising campaigns and fashion shows.

INGRIE WILLIAMS is a freelance fashion stylist and writer on fashion, beauty and health topics. Her work has most recently appeared in *Toronto Life*, *Canadian Family* and *Elevate*, and on ElleCanada.com. She is also the former fashion editor at *Chatelaine*. "I love working with different people on different projects, no two days are ever the same and that keeps things fresh."

SAADA BRANKER is a freelance writer who grew up in Saint-Hubert, Quebec, but currently resides in Toronto. Her work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *NUMB* and *Toronto Sun*. She has a special interest in international economics and ethno cultural issues and writes extensively on these subjects.

DEL COWIE is currently an Assistant Editor at *Exclaim!* His work has been featured in various publications including *Vibe*, *XXL*, *URB* and *EYE WEEKLY*. In this issue of *Sway* he speaks with **Fefe Dobson** about her musical evolution.



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"I am who I am; you see a coloured woman and I'm proud of that."

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Sway is the way

Letters

Unhyphenated Canadian

I AM THRILLED and completely ecstatic over this new magazine. For the longest time, I always thought, why can't Canadian blacks get their own magazine and not have to read the U.S. magazines that hardly ever feature Canadians? I am so grateful for this magazine and I hope and pray that everyone who is involved continues to provide their best for each and every issue.

I would also like to say that I particularly enjoyed the article by Nick Aveling regarding the Junos! Well put — this is what I was always thinking and is exactly why I never watch the Junos! The piece by Tabassum Siddiqui on one of the greatest Canadian artists, k-os, was equally satisfying. Oh, what can I say — every article was just out of this world. I kept turning the pages and smiling and thinking, "finally, a magazine for the urban scene!"

K. L. Smith

WHEN I SAW the first issue of *Sway*, I almost did not pick it up. I thought, here we go again — another Caribbean-focused publication. Perhaps it is the cracks in the Canadian mosaic or perhaps it is a Toronto thing. Whatever, it appears people of colour in the GTA have not bothered to get to know Canadians as myself — descendents from the underground railroad.

I read the spring issue of *Sway* because I saw Tamia on the cover. She too is a descendant of the underground railroad. We have be been living in Ontario before Canada became a nation. We are Canadian. Not Caribbean-Canadian. Not African-Canadian. The Canadian Flag is the only flag we fly. I pray you help change the thinking of Canadians of African descent.

B. Shmaya Harrison

Undeserved inclusion

I HAVE JUST finished reading the Spring 2007 edition of *Sway* and, this being the first time I have read your magazine, I would like to compliment you on every aspect of your publication. However (isn't there always a caveat?), your inclusion of Ben Johnson in the "25 Years of Excellence" retrospective demeans both Harry Jerome's memory and the essence of the award and its previous recipients.

While there can be no denying Mr. Johnson's accomplishments leading up to the Olympics, it will forever be indelibly written that he was caught cheating. Not only did he suffer personal humiliation, he besmirched the efforts of all Canadian athletes at those games. And try as he might, through numerous judicial inquiries, Mr. Johnson will never be able to live down that singular moment when, had fate dealt a different hand, he would have been immortalized for time immemorial.

Let us remember that awards of this nature are given for efforts of distinction, not disgrace.

Mark Kahansky

SWAY IS AN excellent magazine: well-written and touching on the accomplishments of some, and then including the touching story "Fugitive, father, friend." My heart goes out to Joseph Pannell, his friends and his family. A lot of this kind of injustice goes on without any attention. It is a beautiful and well-written magazine. I cannot wait for the next issue. I have read it cover to cover, picked up extra copies and given it to all my West Indian friends. You have accomplished an amazing magazine.

Tara Misra

I JUST WANT to tell you how impressed I am so far with your magazine. The only flaw I detect is the sad fact that you publish only four issues per year. Is there any chance this may be modified soon? How about once a month?

All the very best to you, and may you continue to shine a positive light on our people here in Canada.

Derrick Shaw

I JUST READ *Sway* for the very first time and I'm very pleased to see such an entertaining, informative, and inspiring magazine dedicated to the wonderful people in our community. Very impressive. *Sway* is the way to go!

Brian Francis

Give us your feedback at **letters@swaymag.ca**.

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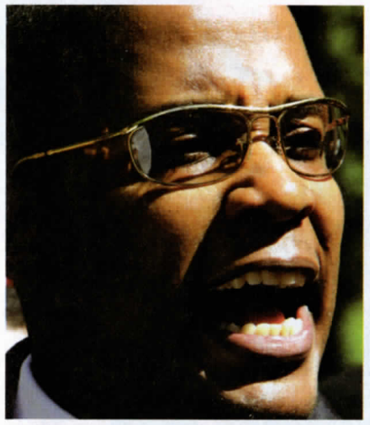
News & Notable

Quebec Gets First Black Cabinet Minister

The province of Quebec got its first black cabinet minister in the National Assembly following the provincial election in March — Yolande James, who was re-elected in the riding of Nelligan (where she had earlier become the province's first black MNA). James was appointed Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities by premier Jean Charest. At 29 years old, James is a lawyer by profession, with degrees from Université de Montréal and Queen's.

"Toronto is the first city to recognize the African malaria pandemic"

— City of Toronto



Malik Shabazz

DIVISION AND HEALING OVER PLANNED SPEECH

Divisions over the scheduled appearance of Black Panthers leader Malik Shabazz have led to a commitment by black and Jewish community leaders to work together, according to news reports.

Shabazz had been invited to speak at an event in Toronto in May by the organization Black Youth Taking Action, which led to protests from Jewish organizations that Shabazz was an anti-semite. Shabazz "has a record of being anti-semitic, he has a record of being anti-police and it's very troublesome," Ontario Community Safety Minister Monte Kwinter told CTV at the time. In any case, Shabazz was detained at the airport by security officers and refused entry to Canada over what officials said was a five-year-old misdemeanor offence. Black Youth Taking Action responded by holding a demonstration at Queen's Park to protest the treatment of Shabazz.

But later that week, a group of black and Jewish community leaders announced that they would undertake a series of joint initiatives as a result of the controversy, in order to show that the divisive elements of their communities are a small minority, according to Maclean's magazine. Among the initiatives announced were 70 "eLearning Centres" that are planned for community centres, churches, temples and mosques.

OFFENSIVE SKETCH LANDS COMEDY TROUPE IN HOT WATER

The operators of a Quebec online video site found themselves before the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal in May after posting a comedy sketch some felt had racist overtones, according to a report by the CBC.

The puppetry sketch by Trés à Claques showed two white characters in a pot of boiling water while a cannibal — a black puppet — prepared to eat them. In addition, the black puppet bore the signs of racist stereotyping, with oversized lips and "a slow, childish way of speaking." One of the white characters refers to the cannibal as "Kunta Kinte," which is the name of a black slave made famous in Alex Haley's book *Roots* and the well-known television adaptation of it.

Quebec Pluriel, a group devoted to promoting diversity in the province, called the video insulting, degrading and irresponsible.

SLUR BY FURNITURE?

A Brampton family was shocked to find, after purchasing a new dark-brown sofa at a Toronto store, that it was delivered carrying a label identifying it as being "nigger-brown," according to a report in the *Toronto Star*.

The family's seven-year-old daughter spotted the tag immediately after the sofa was delivered.

Spokespeople from the shop said that they had been unaware of the labels, affixed at a factory in China. A representative of the store promised to contact the factory in China to ensure such labels do not appear on merchandise in the future.

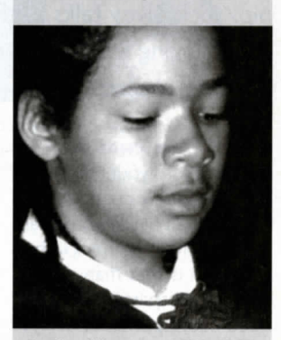
GOING TO THE NET FOR AFRICA

Toronto became the first city in Canada to observe Africa Malaria Day April 25, "recognizing the severity of the malaria pandemic that is the leading killer of children under five years old in Africa," according to an announcement by the City of Toronto.

To observe the day, Mayor David Miller appeared with businesswoman and former politician Belinda Stronach, comedian Rick Mercer, hockey player Hayley Wickenheiser and others to promote "Spread the Net," a campaign to raise funds to buy anti-malarial netting for children in Liberia and Rwanda. ■

In Memoriam

Yolanda King, 1955-2007



Jordan Manners, 1992-2007

Beauty

Beauty ENVY

Simple summer makeovers

BY: Gillian Downes

IF GIVEN THE chance, who wouldn't change at least one thing about their appearance? Whether we feel as though our behind isn't booty-licious or we refuse to step outside without a full face of makeup, many of us are aching to change what our momma gave us. There are, however, simple alternatives to scheduling an appointment for a nip/tuck. *Sway* talks to three beautymakers who are changing the way others see us — and the way we see ourselves.

WHAT YOU'D CHANGE: Eyes that fade into your head without at least six coats of mascara. Not all black women are blessed with long, thick lashes; the truth is that many sisters have short, sparse lashes that need coat upon coat of eyeliner, eyeshadow and mascara to get noticed.

THE QUICK FIX: Eyelash extensions, a painless procedure whereby individual lashes are attached to the top of your lashes with an adhesive.

"Say goodbye to mascara running down your face in the summer — with eyelash extensions you can just get-up-and-go," says Veronica Tran of Pretty Lashes, who boasts a reputation for meticulously applying natural-looking, long-lasting lashes to her clients.

Eyelash extensions typically take 90 minutes to apply and can last up to eight weeks, at which point a refill application is recommended. Caring for your extensions takes minimal effort — Veronica notes that many of her clients toss their mascara and eyelash curlers simply because they're no longer needed.

For lashes that will get you noticed, schedule an appointment for the Pretty Lashes Pampered Girl procedure, $135. Pretty Lashes, 705 King St. West, P2 spa level. 416-629-6936. www.prettylashes.ca.

WHAT YOU'D CHANGE: Hair that refuses to grow into Beyoncé-worthy locks. Black women are known for their diversity when it comes to hair, but that diversity can be limited with short hair.

THE QUICK FIX: Channel Diana Ross' over-the-top 'do or Whitney Houston's pre-Bobby classic bob with hair extensions or a hair weave.

"Extensions are an addition to your own hair; think 'extending' your hair. A hair weave is a full head of extensions," explains Leonie Hodge of Azan's Hair Salon, who applies her more than 15 years of training to serving clients who want anything and everything when it comes to extensions.

Though she is aware that hair extensions are still considered to be a bit taboo among black women, Leonie points to the benefits of receiving "immediate gratification with extensions." From fiery red tresses to microbraids that hang effortlessly, extensions can transform your look with one simple twist of a braid.

Un-beweavable hair weaves start at $225. Azan's Hair Salon, 126 Davenport Road. 416-944-0262. www.azanshair.com

WHAT YOU'D CHANGE: Your flat, lifeless booty. Dancer, cabaret performer and Flirty Girl Fitness striptease aerobics instructor Suzi Horton recommends the sultry art of sexy in order to firm that rear.

THE QUICK FIX: Striptease aerobics that'll get you the badonkadonk you so desperately crave.

Flirty Girl Fitness offers two sexy ways to tame that jiggle: chair striptease and lap dancing classes for those who are looking for something more enticing than dumbbells and leg lifts.

A dancer since the age of three (she has performed onstage with such acclaimed artists as Perry Farrell and Prince), Horton's company, She Visions, produces Tiger Lily's, an erotic cabaret show that is performed every Saturday at Toronto's Laurentian Room.

Years of dancing onstage, touring with celebrated musicians and performing in videos has allowed Horton to perfect the art of slinking sexily across a floor, and she encourages others to give it a try as an alternative to sweating it out at the gym. "(Striptease aerobics) is a unique way to exercise," she explains. Thanks to an intense workout filled with bends, gyrations, contractions and deep pliés, those who are brazen enough to accept this sexy challenge may start to see results in two weeks. Significant results are achieved in six weeks.

Flirty Girl Fitness offers one hour drop-in classes and two-hour weekend workshops. Private classes are available for the shy. Drop-in classes, $20. Workshops, $40. Flirty Girl Fitness, 462 Wellington St. West. 416-920-1400. www.flirtygirlfitness.com.

Three to get

Too busy to maintain a beauty regimen? Create a simple summer look with these must-haves!

BY: Gillian Downes

Pretty In The City Mineral Bronzer in Bronze Envy, $35. Available at www.prettyinthecity.ca.

RADIANT SKIN

For many women, skipping foundation simply isn't an option. This summer, let your skin's natural radiance shine through by choosing a translucent powder and save the heavy, matte look for winter.

SUMMER TIP: Bronzing powders are a great alternative to everyday foundations. Pretty In The City's Mineral Bronzer offers sheer coverage with a hint of shimmer. Perfect for that summer glow!

Pantene Pro-V Daily Moisture Renewal Conditioner, $6.49. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart.

HAIR CARE

Though many sisters shudder at the thought of water coming into contact with their hair, not cleansing it in between visits to the salon is doing more damage than good. Don't forget that your hair is attached to your scalp, and dirty, product-filled hair often leads to breakouts, especially along the hairline.

BEAUTY BENEFIT: Wash the gunk out of your hair with a clear shampoo and slick it back with Pantene Pro-V Daily Moisture Renewal Conditioner. This vitamin-rich conditioner replenishes parched hair.

Balmshell Lip Gloss in "Confessions of a Call Girl"; $22. Available at www.balmshell.com.

LIP TIP

Ladies, stop licking your lips! Even though you think it's sexy to run your drippy tongue all over them à la LL Cool J, saliva is extremely drying and can lead to chapped, peeling lips your lover won't like.

BEAUTY BENEFIT: Care for your lips by coating them in a colourful, nourishing balm. Try Balmshell Lip Gloss in "Confessions of a Call Girl," a sheer hot orange shade with just a hint of colour.

save face

The thought of bare skin in the summer gives some the horrors — blotchy, oily skin and (gasp!) acne inspire thoughts of covering up. (Turtlenecks in the middle of July, anyone?) *Sway* offers beauty tips to get your skin ready for its day in the sun.

Summer skin tips

BY: Gillian Downes

THE KILLER Bs

PROBLEM: Break-outs and blemishes.

SOLUTION: As good as it feels on our skin, the sun — along with the use of slimy, pore-clogging products — often encourages the production of acne. The build-up of acne-producing oil and dead skin cells can cause more than the occasional blemish. This summer, opt for oil-free products and incorporate a weekly exfoliation into your summer beauty regime. Sloughing off flaky, grimy skin uncovers vibrant, healthy skin underneath. Your skin will thank you for it!

SKIN FIX: Made with organic cane sugar and fair trade olive oil, simply. body polish, by Amanda, scrubs away blemish-causing impurities. Apply polish to a wet washcloth and gently massage skin.

Body Polish: simply. by Amanda, $15. Available at Grassroots, 408 Bloor St. West.

LOOKING SLICK

PROBLEM: Greasy skin

SOLUTION: As you bask in summer's glow, a combination of sweat, product and pollution can produce a grubby build-up that will leave your skin struggling to breathe. While steamy temperatures have a way of making us cap off each day with a long, cold shower, that does little more than strip away your skin's natural oils (and, yes, your skin needs those oils). End your summer days with a refreshing face and body mask to help draw out the dirt that contaminates your pores.

SKIN FIX: Ghassool, aka Moroccan Lava clay, is an age-old beauty secret best known for its cleansing and conditioning properties.

Ghassool Face Mask, $16.99. Available at www.ghassool.com.

PATCHWORK

PROBLEM: Uneven skin tone

SOLUTION: Whether your summers are spent lounging on a patio or roaming through shopping malls stocking up on the season's "it" bikinis, you'll want to look your best. Unfortunately, patchy, blotchy skin can stand in the way of that. For some, a weekly exfoliation can help alleviate an uneven skin tone by stimulating skin cells and encouraging new cell production; some of us, however, are stuck with having to cover our skin in order to create the illusion of evenness (thanks mom and dad for those skintastic genes!). If having skin that looks as though it's been kissed by the sun doesn't come naturally, fake it! Choose a foundation that offers a hint of shimmer for that sexy summer glow and apply it after you've exfoliated your skin and applied a moisturizer.

SKIN FIX: MAC's Hyper Real SPF 15 liquid foundation gives your skin a smooth, pearlescent finish. For the best coverage, apply Hyper Real with a brush.

MAC Hyper Real SPF 15 liquid foundation, $32.50. Available at www.maccosmetics.com.

Beauty

Ask an expert:

BY: Gillian Downes

Q **I LOVE SUMMER**, even though my makeup doesn't! No matter how many times I apply (and reapply) my makeup, it always ends up running down my face by dinnertime. Is there anyway to prevent makeup meltdown?

A Karen Warner says: The secret to perfect and long-lasting makeup starts with great skin. Make sure you cleanse daily and use a toner and oil-free moisturizer before applying your makeup. To maximize your makeup's longevity start with a primer; try Cargo's Liquid Powder ($26, www.cargocosmetics.com), which can be worn alone to even out your skin tone or as a base before you apply your foundation. This will set your foundation and give you a summer glow without the shine. Next, you want to apply a lightweight, oil-free foundation; MAC's Select SPF 15 ($30, www.maccosmetics.com) gives you a long-lasting, natural-looking matte finish. For a radiant finish use Setting FX by Cover FX ($30, www.coverfx.com), a loose-setting powder. Reapplying makeup throughout the day only packs on more product and gives you a "cake face." Invest in oil-absorbing blotting sheets to get rid of that oily sheen without smudging or removing makeup. Try Lancôme's Shine-Control Blotting Sheets ($15.50, www.lancome.com).

Karen "Kiwi" Warner is a Toronto-based freelance makeup artist. Her work has adorned such celebrity faces as Cassie, Andrea Lewis and Melanie Durrant. Amorphous Salon, 1178 Eglinton Ave. West. 416-782-2135. www.kiwihairandmakeup.com.

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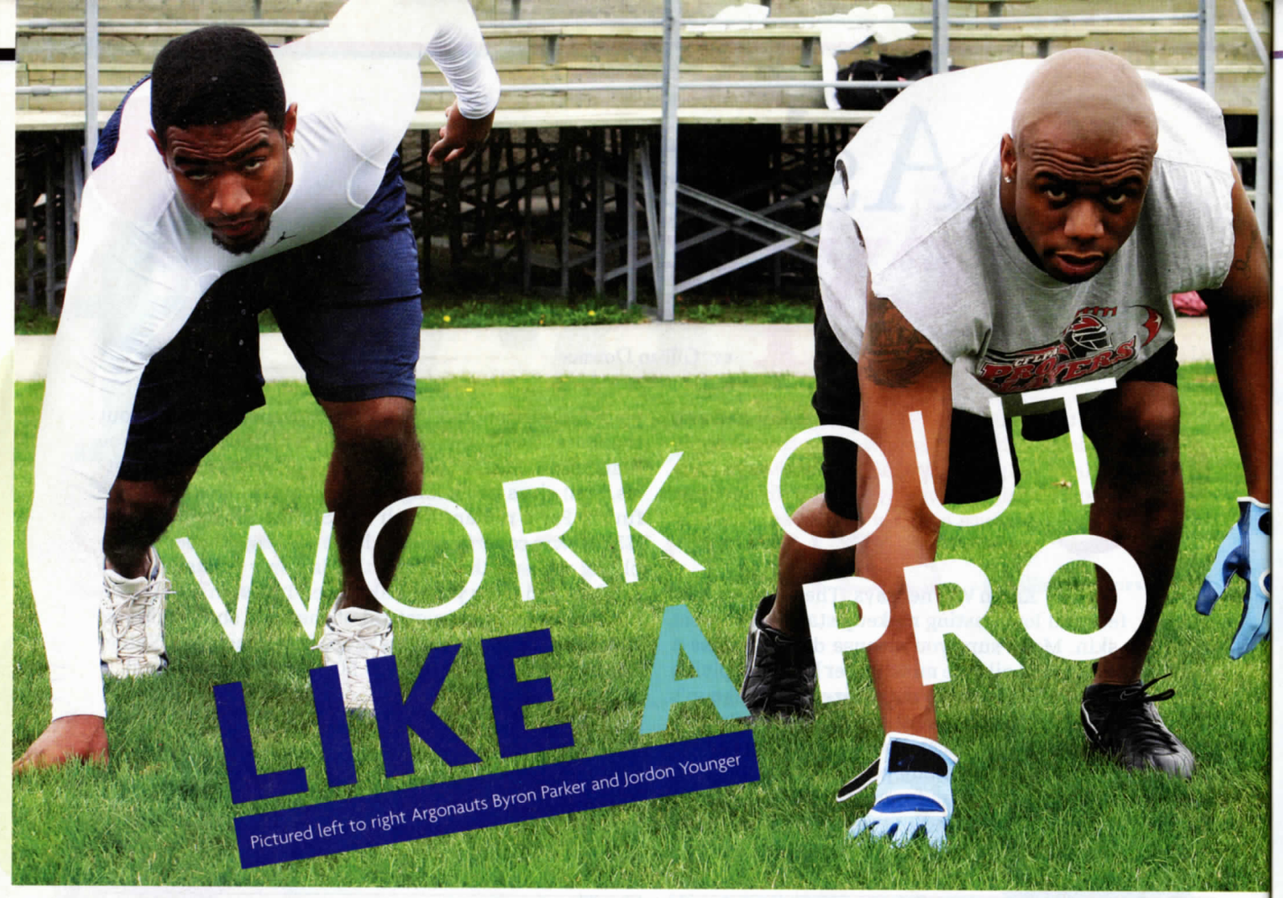


WORK OUT LIKE A PRO

Pictured left to right Argonauts Byron Parker and Jordon Younger

Have you been spending your spring holed up in the gym doing three-hour workouts in anticipation of bathing suit weather? Is your body toned, fit and ready to show off this summer? If the answer is no, don't worry — you're just like the rest of us. And with that in mind, *Sway* connected with Toronto Argonauts Jordan Younger (two time East Division All-Star cornerback) and Byron Parker (2003 NCAA basketball slam dunk champion and Argos cornerback) in order to get you ready for the summer by showing you how to work out like a pro.

BY: Roxanne Elizabeth Francois PHOTOGRAPHY: Melissa Bessey

What are the most important factors to remember to achieve maximum results?

PARKER: A good breakfast is important — oatmeal or bran cereal or a muffin. Everyone should eat something in the morning; we all need something to help you fuel your day.

YOUNGER: A good diet is essential. What you eat the days before your workout can really affect your performance. Also, make sure to stay hydrated during your workout, lots of liquid is crucial.

What kind of strategies do you use in order to stay on top of your game?

YOUNGER: Mental preparation — I remember all of the times that I lost a game, and then realize how much I hate defeat. There are days that you might not feel like you want to work out, but you've got to stay motivated to reach your goal. Failure cannot be an option.

What contributes to people seeing results in their training?

PARKER: Cardiovascular training is important. As a cornerback, speed and stamina are important. We do drills walking over and under hurdles to improve our hip strength and flexibility. This is a safe way to improve speed and agility, and helps to prevent injury, especially during high-impact cardiovascular exercise. Strong hips help with sudden changes of direction or explosive movements.

What do you have to say to people who aren't athletes, but want to keep their bodies in shape?

YOUNGER: My job is to be fast, yet strong enough to compete. I concentrate on working out using light weights and high repetitions. If you are not looking to get bulky, choose to do functional exercises. Instead of heavy weights, add variations to your workouts by changing hand positions, adjusting the exercise angle or using a medicine ball.

What kind of strength training exercises do you do?

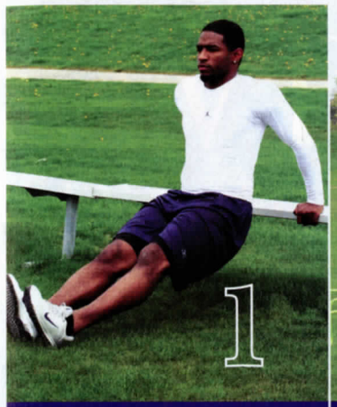
YOUNGER: I do squats, push ups, chin ups, bench presses and dips.

What aspect of training do people often overlook?

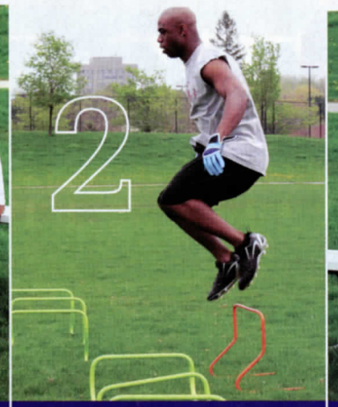
PARKER: Core strength training! When a person's core strength breaks down, everything else is going to break down with it. Every movement starts from the centre of your body. It is important that everyone strengthen their core — it is key to improving balance.

What kind of core training exercises do you do?

PARKER: Medicine ball tosses, boxer sit ups, and six-inch leg and knee raises. ■



Parker does a tricep dip.



Younger gets some cardio over hurdles.

Parker works his core with six-inch leg lifts.

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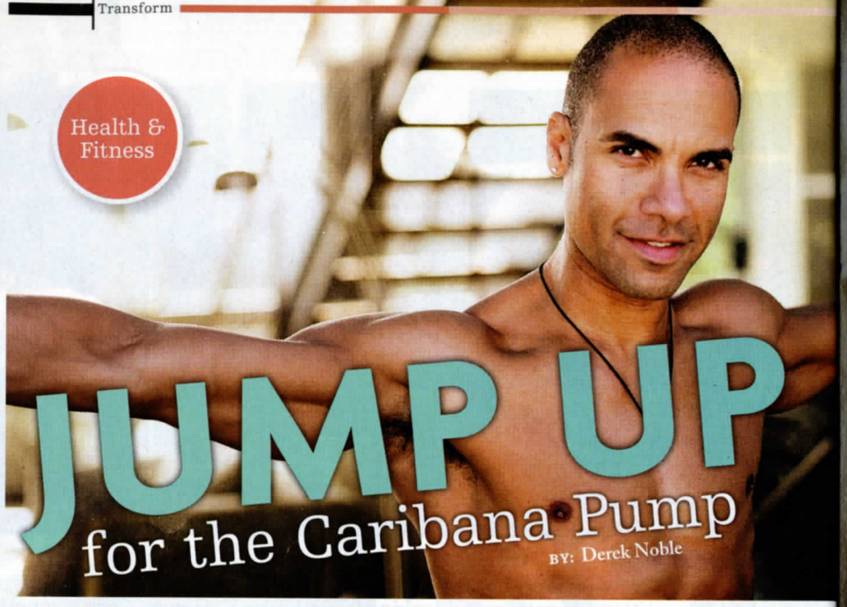


JUMP UP for the Caribana Pump

BY: Derek Noble

WITH SUMMER HERE, who wouldn't rather hang out in a park instead of being cooped up in a gym? No problem. Follow this fun and easy exercise regimen and you'll rid yourself of any gym withdrawal. Doing these exercises at least three times a week, along with a healthy diet, can keep you outdoors and fit all season long. The countdown to Caribana has begun, so you better start now.

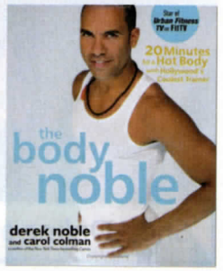
THE PICNIC BENCH PRESS:
Place your arms on the edge of the picnic bench, shoulder width apart, and put your feet and legs straight back behind you. Begin this exercise by bending your elbows 90 degrees as you lower your chest towards the edge of the picnic table. Press back and continue for two sets of 10–20 reps.

THE PICNIC BENCH DIP:
Start by placing your hands shoulder width apart on the edge of the picnic bench seat with your feet on the ground shoulder width apart. Bend your elbows 90 degrees and raise your body up as you extend your elbows. Do not lock your elbows out at the top. Bend back down and repeat two sets of 10–20 reps.

THE PICNIC BENCH AB CRUNCH:
Sit on a bench at a slight incline with your hands at the side of your head. Crunch forward towards your knees. Feel the contraction in your abs as you squeeze these muscles. Do two sets of 15–20 reps.

THE TREE LEG RAISE:
Your legs are such a big muscle group. And the more you activate them in a day, the more calories you will burn. Start with your feet shoulder width apart. Keep your body in its neutral alignment. Stand tall with your arms directly in front of you on a tree. Raise your leg sideways as you focus on squeezing your butt muscles. Stand up and start again on both sides. Repeat two sets of 15 reps.

THE BOOTY BUTT LUNGE:
Start by placing your feet shoulder width apart. Without touching the ground, move one leg forward placing your foot flat on the grass while the leg behind bends as you lunge forward. (You can hold a tree trunk for extra support and balance.) As you step forward push back and feel the squeeze in your legs and butt muscles. Switch legs and repeat. Do two sets of 10–15 reps.



Canada's Derek Noble is a fitness guru to the stars and the author of The Body Noble. www.bodynoble.com

SWEET EMANCIPATION

It's summertime, and the livin' is easy

THIS YEAR MARKS the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade. It may only be 200 years since we've become masters of our own homes, but how the tables have turned.

Fashion

RENEE
Aurelie eyelet dress $199 @ Club Monaco
Black leather patch work Marc Jacobs Bag $1770 @ Davids
Yucatan raffia floppy hat $65 @ Big it up
Crystal drop earrings @ coletteharmon.com

RENEE
Cream mesh w/coral floral blouson top $445 @ Ports 1961
Mulberry shorts $79 @ Club Monaco
Oatmeal w/navy accents peep toe shoes $129.99 @ Winners
Coral teardrop earrings @ coletteharmon.com

TYRONE
Peach golf shirt Façonnable $115 @ Harry Rosen
Striped V-neck sweater Lacoste $225 @ Harry Rosen
Navy linen pants Façonnable $250 @ Harry Rosen
Brown loafers Lorenzo Banfi $550 @ Davids

TYRONE
Baby blue blazer Façonnable $1,195 @ Harry Rosen
Rose pink linen Façonnable shirt $250 @ Harry Rosen
Multi stripe pants Etro $350 @ Harry Rosen
Multicolour pocket square Dion $35 @ Harry Rosen
White leather shoes Hudson $195 @ Davids

RENEE
Strapped dress $995 @ Ports 1961
Multi-strand metallic pumps $79.90 @ Winners
Copper/crystal necklace, onyx
drop earrings @ coletteharmon.com

TYRONE
Beige suit Canali $1,898 @ Harry Rosen
Blue shirt Hugo Boss $175 @ Harry Rosen
Floral Pocket square Dion $35 @ Harry Rosen
Black sleek front shoe Hudson $235 @ Harry Rosen

TYRONE
White linen jacket $69.90 @ H&M
White linen pants $39.90 @ H&M
Blue & white floral shirt $39.90 @ H&M

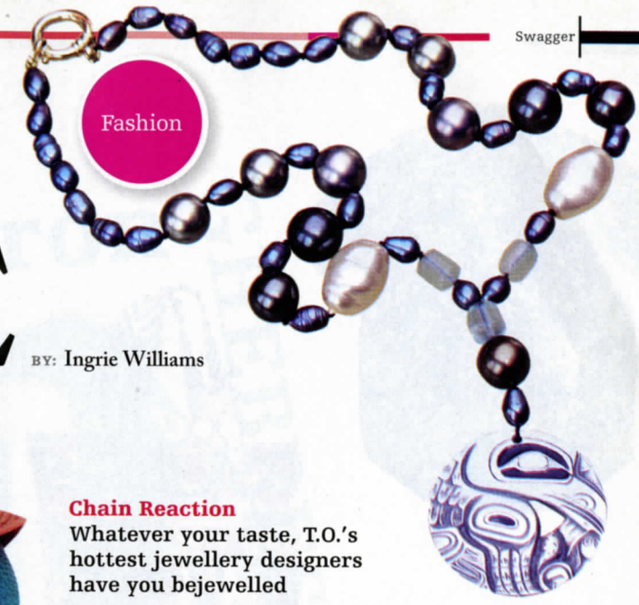
RENEE
Multicolour dress $149.99 @ Winners
Multi-strand metallic pumps $79.90 @ Winners
Crystal earrings Cathy B $470 @ TNT Woman
Silver crystal ring Cathy B $140 @ TNT Woman

PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael Chambers
STYLIST: Michelle Lyte for Judy Inc.
CONCEPT: Alan A. Vernon
HAIR & MAKEUP: Jordana Maxwell for Judy Inc.
MODELS: NAM Management Inc.
SPECIAL THANKS: Norwayne Anderson, David Clemmer, Sean Harrison, Natasha Eck
LOCATION: Four Seasons Private Residences Toronto Showroom designed by Brian Gluckstein

Fashion

Sizzlin' Summer of STYLE

BY: Ingrie Williams



Top It Off

When the humidex is off the charts, grab some shade with a killer hat. These straw fitted caps strike a chic silhouette and will have people thinking you've parked your polo pony outside. The perfect blend of fashion and function.

Reinhard Plank hats, $345 each, at Basia, www.basiadesign.com.

SHOP WATCH:
meet SHERNETT SWABY

INCE GRADUATING FROM The International Academy of Design in 1998, esident designer/business mastermind hernett Swaby has survived several years the fickle world of retail. And the Jamaican ative is getting ready to push her label at L'Oreal Fashion Week in September and expand into the Big Apple.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," says Swaby. "Every ear my business grows and it's good to look back and say, did it all myself.' "

From her eponymous Shernett Swaby couture line to the omfort-driven everyday basics of her Designer Picks collecon (all pieces less than $100, like blouson tunic dresses and mpire-waist shirts), Swaby has you covered. The higher-end ustom line includes dresses wrapped in swirls of intricately titched ribbons and flourishes of overlapping leaf-shaped eather. "The 3-D effect sets me apart," says Swaby. "It shows he passion I have for my work and you can't deny that it's a piece of art." And now there are plans to expand into the back room with a gallery-style display space to showcase all her fantastical creations.

Swaby also offers free alterations on all of her garments for as long as you own them. (Hmmm, just like Harry Rosen.)

187A Queen St East. 416-367-1333, www.shernettswaby.com

Chain Reaction

Whatever your taste, T.O.'s hottest jewellery designers have you bejewelled

CUTTING-EDGE: Make a bold style statement with a striking, unisex piece from Ghetto Panda, the collaborative efforts of design duo Christopher Estridge and Bryan Van Dusen. The inspiration for their one-of-a-kind works comes from everything — literally. "We have a real collage sensibility, from Jerry Springer to Shakespeare," says Estridge.

Necklace, $225, www.ghettopanda.com. For more about Christopher Estridge and Ghetto Panda, see page 44.

CLASSIC: If cascades of charms, crystals and Lucite get you going, pay a visit to Colette Harmon. The veteran designers' timeless creations are forever fabulous. "They're light and clean-looking — and you can wear them with everything," she says.

Necklace, $495, www.colletteharmon.com.

COLOURFUL: Heat things up with a little something from Niya Melodie Accessories. Niya describes her designs as "feminine, sexy and meant to complement a woman's body." The latest made-to-order collection features steamy Miami Beach shades of turquoise, pink, orange and yellow.

Necklace $40, www.niyamelodieaccessories.com.

Trend Watch:
Caution: GRAPHIC CONTENT
Attention-grabbing florals, eye-catching abstracts and notice-me stripes stalked the runways of every major designer from Diane Von Furstenberg to Versace. They're an easy-to-wear way of adding a little punch to your summer staples. Ladies, pick up a printed tote for running weekend errands or slip on a floor-length dress when you're ready for a night on the town. Guys, get in on the action with patterned ties for formal affairs and button-front short sleeve shirts for kicking back in style.

Dress: Winners, $50, www.winners.ca. Bag, Suede and Co., $100, www.suedeandco.com. Shirt: Gap, $35, www.gap.com. Tie: $185, Duchamp at Holt Renfrew, www.holtrenfrew.com.

Price Check:
Must-haves of the season to fit every budget

HI/LO HER: On the wedge
Step out in style in a red patent slingback.

(top) Spring, $50, www.myspringshoes.com.
(bottom) Sergio Rossi at Davids, $695, www.davidsfootwear.com.

HI/LO HIM: Made in the shade
Scope out the scene behind a pair of tortoiseshell aviators.

(top) Tom Ford at Spectacle, $470, www.spectacle-eyewear.com.
(bottom) H&M, $10, www.hm.com.

Saron GHEBRESSELLASSIE

People with Sway

Ancestral pride

OCCUPATION
Student at Ryerson University

CONTRIBUTION
Driven by a passion to promote achievement and success in her community, Saron acts as a mentor and organizer committed to empowering young men and women. Formidable and multi-dimensional, she helps others by quietly passing on skills and information in order to inspire a new group of leaders. Her work has not gone unnoticed — Saron has recently received a number of public accolades, and has been selected as the 2007 YWCA Young Woman of Distinction.

INSPIRATION
I am inspired by the past — by the ancestors who have gone before and accomplished so much through their bravery and sacrifice. I look back to the civil rights movement, the end of apartheid and African liberation. In all of these instances, there were strong black women supporting and advancing the cause. They are my foundation — they are my inspiration.

Graham REID

People with Sway

Empowered by family

OCCUPATION
Executive Director, Nu Jazz Society/JazzByGenre

CONTRIBUTION
Frustrated with the monotony of Toronto's jazz landscape, Reid decided that a new energy had to be injected into the scene. The result was the creation of the Nu Jazz Society, an organization aimed at bridging culture and generation gaps through jazz music. To date, the organization has successfully hosted a number of well-received live shows under the moniker "JazzByGenre", and will be producing its first JazzByGenre festival in August. For location info go to www.jazzbygenre.com

INSPIRATION
I've always had a very nurturing and encouraging family. I have so many fond memories of all of us sitting around and laughing while listening to music. My younger brother is affected by a physical disability, and I just hope that my efforts in life will allow me to provide him with the great encounters which will add to his life experience. The way he appreciates the fullness of his life pushes me to do more. He's in everything I do … he's my inspiration.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: Sarah Haywood

Joan JENKINSON

People with Sway

Life is a journey

OCCUPATION
Director of Independent Production/Executive Producer for VisionTV; One: the Body, Mind & Spirit channel and the Christian Channel.

CONTRIBUTION
A founding board member of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival, as well as co-founder and founding Chair of the ReelWorld Film Festival, Jenkinson has worked tirelessly to support the aspirations of emerging artists. Jenkinson is also the co-creator and executive producer of the Cultural Diversity Drama Competition which has created three television drama pilots, *Hotel Babylon*, *St. Jamestown*, and *Kink in My Hair*.

INSPIRATION
"I entered into the church at about age 12 and instantly I was given a sense of direction and purpose. The pastor groomed me for leadership and helped me to gain a sense of myself and the impact that I could have in this world. That early experience has always propelled me forward. Through it, I've come to understand that life is a journey, and I'm still finding my way."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: Kennon Vaughan

People with Sway

School saved my life

Hon. Justice Arthur C. DOWNES

OCCUPATION
Justice of the Peace (Retired), Educator, Activist

CONTRIBUTION
The Hon. Justice Arthur C. Downes has spent a lifetime providing honesty, integrity, and even-handed justice to the citizens of Ontario. His dedication was recently recognized by the Second Chance Foundation, as the group announced the creation of the Arthur Downes Second Chance Library to be opened at Brookside Youth Centre in Cobourg later this year.

INSPIRATION
There are so many people I could mention; Charles Dubin, Roy McMurtry, Elton Lent and also my father; all of these are men who have helped me to become the person that I am today. But I'd especially like to mention, Daniel Muhort, my elementary school teacher. As a child I was never someone you'd call the pride of the class, but one day I scored second place on a school evaluation test that we'd taken, and from that point on Mr. Murhort took the time to nurture the potential he had witnessed in me. It is amazing what happens when someone believes in you — I guess you could say that he saved my life."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: Melissa Bessey

Beautiful Barbados

The fast track TO FABULOUS

BARBADOS has it all — sights, sounds & celebrity

By Melanie Reffes

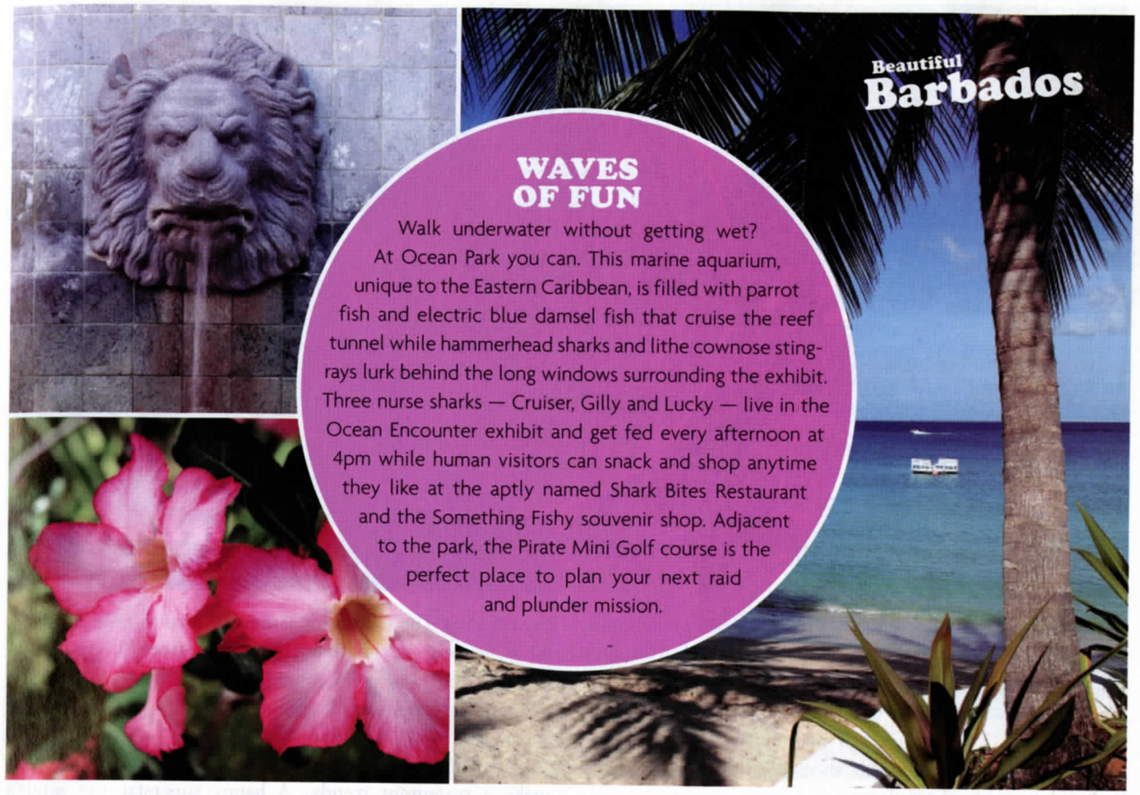
Shedding its stuffy image, Barbados has morphed into a bonafide gastronomic paradise where you can spend a week eating wonderfully well at every meal without visiting the same restaurant twice. From the ladies with the mega-watt smiles at the Oistins Fish Fry to the rum-splashed happy hours in Bridgetown's bustling bars, Barbados is an A-list super-haunt for a bevy of bronzed bodies and show-bizzers who flock to the sandy beaches, swanky restaurants and super-swishy resorts.

By the 1940s, Hollywood's glamocracy decided this sybaritic sliver of Shangri-La was the place to be, but there was a shortage of places to stay until construction began on a small country house in a cove called Sandy Lane. Fast forward to the 21st century and the small country house on the platinum coast has become the premier address in the Caribbean with 112 suites, including a spectacular, 678-square-metre, five-bedroom villa replete with a butler and chef. From the moment you arrive, you know you're in top-shelf territory. A chauffeured Bentley sweeps into the driveway passing regal mahogany trees that stand guard over the postcard-perfect crescent beach. The Palladian-style resort, with a pink and cream stone façade, has a star-studded guest-book that includes bad boys Mick Jagger and Eminem.

Tiger Woods married his long-time Swedish love Elin Nordegren on the 19th hole of the golf course (rumoured to have cost a cool $1.5 million). The poster couple for "pretty" enjoyed an elegant dinner with their good buds Oprah and Michael Jordan, and then retreated to his mega-yacht — Tiger owns 17 — with fishing rods and reels in tow.

"They rented all the rooms to ensure their privacy," says Paris Permenter (www.lovetripper.com). "Sandy Lane also hosted the wedding of model Jemma Kidd to the Earl of Mornington, and Liv Tyler and Arckid rocker Royston Langdon who opted for a villa for their island vows."

Blink and you'll miss it, and that would be a shame because Connie de Grill Master dishes up fall-off-the-bone ribs at his no-frills stall next to the Pentecostal Church in Payne's Bay. (When not grilling, Connie is in the kitchen at Sandy Lane where his claim to fame, apart from his rib recipe, of course, is the meal he created for Tiger Woods'



WAVES OF FUN

Walk underwater without getting wet? At Ocean Park you can. This marine aquarium, unique to the Eastern Caribbean, is filled with parrot fish and electric blue damsel fish that cruise the reef tunnel while hammerhead sharks and lithe cownose stingrays lurk behind the long windows surrounding the exhibit. Three nurse sharks — Cruiser, Gilly and Lucky — live in the Ocean Encounter exhibit and get fed every afternoon at 4pm while human visitors can snack and shop anytime they like at the aptly named Shark Bites Restaurant and the Something Fishy souvenir shop. Adjacent to the park, the Pirate Mini Golf course is the perfect place to plan your next raid and plunder mission.

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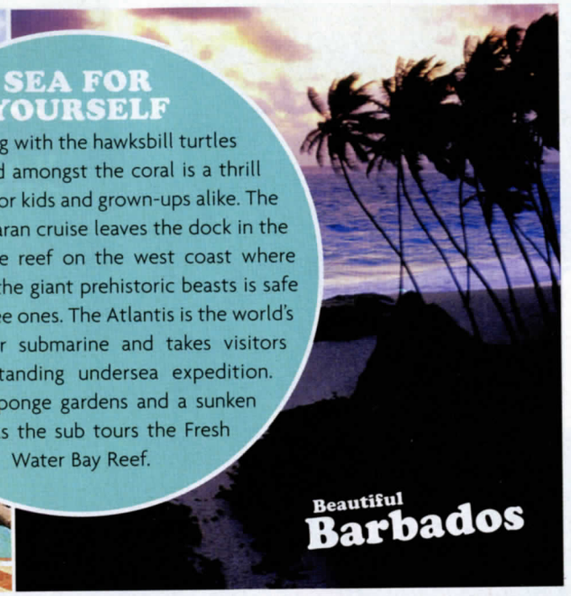
Bajan-born chanteuse Rihanna chills along Accra Beach.



SEA FOR YOURSELF

Swimming with the hawksbill turtles as they feed amongst the coral is a thrill of a lifetime for kids and grown-ups alike. The El Tigre catamaran cruise leaves the dock in the morning for the reef on the west coast where frolicking with the giant prehistoric beasts is safe even for the wee ones. The Atlantis is the world's first passenger submarine and takes visitors on an outstanding undersea expedition. Discover sponge gardens and a sunken wreck as the sub tours the Fresh Water Bay Reef.

Beautiful **Barbados**

wedding. Also in Paynes Bay and not in the guidebooks, the small blue house with the tin roof called Roti Den stuffs hand-wrapped rotis with beef, goat, vegetables and duck at prices that won't break the bank. With one table, one chef and a long queue of people who know a good thing when they taste it, this slice of island life is easy to find and guaranteed to please.

Once upon a time it was the only garage on the west coast licensed to sell gasoline; today it's a snazzy restaurant in the chic Lone Star Hotel where suites are named after antique cars. Waiters in white car-mechanic jumpsuits cater to hoity-toity Hollywood bigwigs like Keira Knightly, who digs the catch of the day and Michael Caine, who contemplates his career gazing at the azure Caribbean Sea.

Worth the splurge with tables arranged on stone tiers that resemble an amphitheatre, the mood is as dramatic as the menu at The Cliff in St James. As you sip a mojito (ask for it, it's not on the menu,) you may spot hip-hop royalty Beyoncé and Jay-Z who come to indulge in an artistic array of tempting creations like onion soup with curried scallops and seared tuna on wilted spinach.

Celebrities don't just go to trendy restaurants, they make a restaurant trendy. A happy superstar can send a restaurant into orbit with reservations harder to get than the phone number of a discreet plastic surgeon. Rivaling the best, Barbados is the hottest new culinary "cool" with the publication of the 2007 Best of Barbados — the first and only Zagat guide to a Caribbean island.

Picking up top honours in the Zagat survey, and the only eatery with a Four Diamond rating, The Restaurant at Southsea wows with a fusion menu and unrivalled service (think: hi-beam mini-flashlights for reading the menu in the

CONTINUED ON: 37

SUPER NATURAL

Submerge your senses in Harrison's Caves where the pools, waterfalls, stalagmites and caverns of crystallized limestone are rare phenomena of nature formed over thousands of years. Electrically-operated trams venture to the subterranean chamber, and at the lowest level visitors can walk along side a cascading waterfall, which plunges deep into emerald pools of crystal clear water.

Tiger Woods married his wife Elin on the 19th hole of the golf course in Barbados.

Good News for patients on Dialysis!

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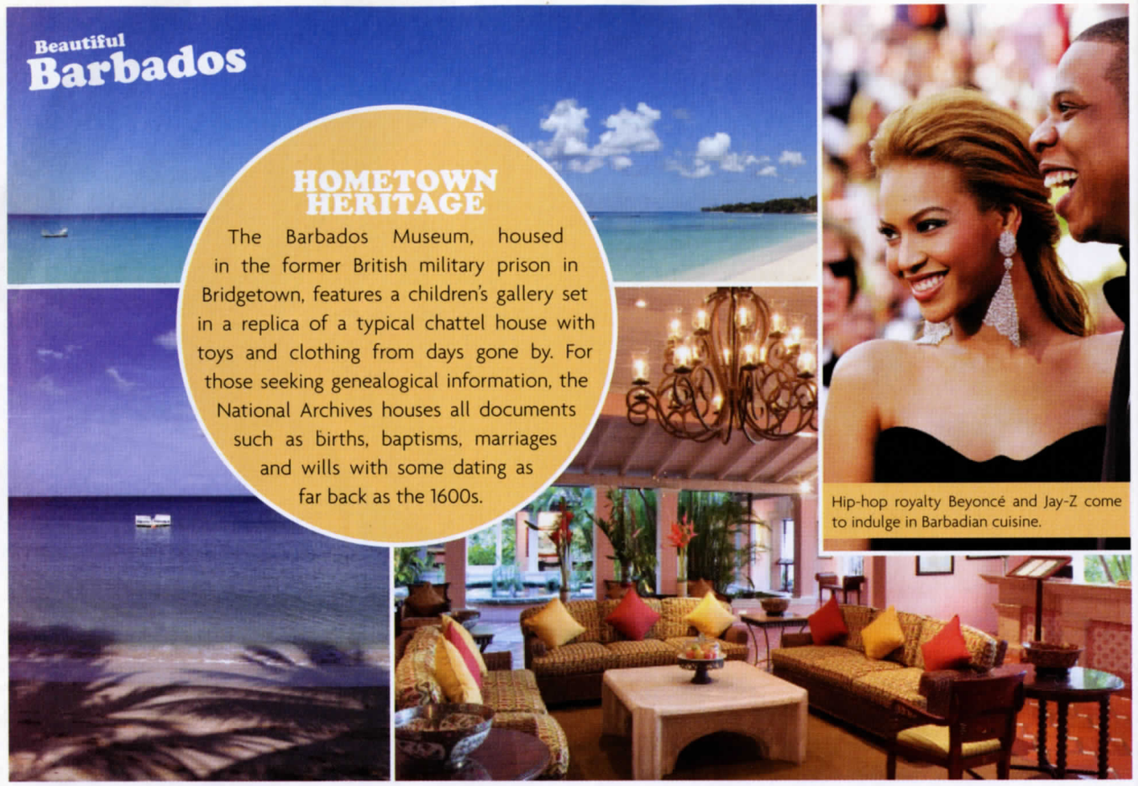
Beautiful
Barbados
HOMETOWN HERITAGE
The Barbados Museum, housed in the former British military prison in Bridgetown, features a children's gallery set in a replica of a typical chattel house with toys and clothing from days gone by. For those seeking genealogical information, the National Archives houses all documents such as births, baptisms, marriages and wills with some dating as far back as the 1600s.

Hip-hop royalty Beyoncé and Jay-Z come to indulge in Barbadian cuisine.

FROM PAGE: 34

moonlight). *Law & Order*'s Richard Belzer proclaimed his mussels "the best in the world," and Taye Diggs gets his groove back at the bar.

Ask Zoe Clarke, as she's grilling the catch of the day on her sidewalk barbecue in the St. Lawrence Gap across the street from The Restaurant at Southsea, about the culinary explosion and you'll hear one of many treasured proverbs. "Visitors who eat flying fish are sure to return to Barbados one day," she says with a twinkle in her eye as she tucks a slab of the succulent fish in tin foil, slides it neatly next to a wedge of her signature macaroni pie and offers a drizzle of spicy pepper sauce. "There are so many places to eat these days; no one ever leaves the island hungry."

Originally named Jamestown after its benefactor King James I of England, the first settlement in Barbados, now called Holetown, is the epicentre of all-things culinary and crammed full of restaurants, bistros, cafes and rum shops. Tucked into a secluded courtyard, Mango Bay Resort lays claim to a funky Friday night beach barbecue.

Around the corner in a chattel-house-turned-restaurant, Ragamuffins keeps a West Indian beat with its fiery hot curries and addictive jerk chicken. Cozy in the airy garden, reservations are recommended on Sunday when Les Girls kick up their heels in the Mannequins in Motion cabaret show.

"She can be a tad moody at times," says Paul Matthews, referring to his wife and explaining why he named his restaurant Angry Annie's. With a gingerbread façade in cheery yellows, greens and pinks, this seasoned favourite tempts with a yummy menu of limbo lamb, rasta pasta and jump-up ribs.

Unleash your inner chef at Enid's Cooking School in the Almond Beach Club where cooking lessons reveal the trade secrets to mouth-watering saltfish cakes, fish soup and seafood curry. Sophia Beckles is both chef and teacher, and says bland food just isn't allowed. "Bajan seasoning is the Caribbean Viagra," she says smiling. "It hits the spot and puts you in the mood." The Almond Resort also gets a fair share of glitterati laying their designer towels on the sand. British actor Martine McCutcheon (*Love Actually*) brought her entourage to the all-inclusive resort; supermodel Rachel Hunter does push-ups on the beach next to Edmonton Oilers supercentre Jarrett Stoll, and British R&B sensation Joss Stone tops off her tan under the glistening Bajan sky.

Poolside at the Café Taboras, in the magnificently mani-

ANIMAL HOUSE

Watch the green monkeys at close range at the Barbados Wildlife Reserve, which is also home to a few deer, otters, agouti (like a guinea pig with longer thinner legs) and a few elegant pink flamingoes. Sitting pretty in a natural mahogany forest across the road from the Farley Hill National Park in the northern parish of St. Peter, the Reserve also boasts a rare iguana sanctuary. As the last mangrove woodland on the Island, Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary is a wetland wonderland and a nirvana for bird-watchers with sightings of the rare Caribbean coot and the Scarlet ibis. Get there early to catch a glimpse of the monkeys and spend the rest of the day meandering through the lush vegetation.

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BLUE HORIZON

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cured Fairmont Pavilion Resort, high tea is royally served as if the Queen herself were going to pop in for a sweet currant slice and a cuppa. TV's notorious killjoy, Simon Cowell (spotted in a skimpy speedo) is a fan of the west coast resort along with fellow Brit John Cleese, diva Mariah Carey, Pierce Brosnan and super-rich Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban.

With mint-green shutters that open to the breaking waves below, the Fish Pot, in the sleepy fishing village of Shermans, is perched on a wooden deck inside a 17th century fort. Overseeing a menu that changes every two weeks, chef Stephen Belgrave uses a bounty of herbs to season his seared scallops kissed with cumin oil and pan-fried red snapper with roasted pepper mashed potatoes. "I get bored easily," he says, "but the fish market is minutes away so my choices are many."

MMM MMM GOOD

And after a day of family fun, Chefette is a kid-friendly restaurant with a social conscience and a menu of hand-wrapped rotis and spicy chicken wings. The island-wide chain funds school scholarships and other initiatives, and scoops the biggest ice-cream cones under the sun.

Quaint and quiet on the rugged Atlantic side amidst exhilarating views and swaying cabbage palms, Naniki (an Arawak Indian word for "full of life") is a tree-house-turned-dining-room. Down-home specialties include the Bajan staple cou cou (mashed corn meal and okra), and for fearless foodies, puddin' and souse (pigs entrails stuffed with sweet potatoes, pigs feet and ears). Jazz great Oscar Peterson visits every year for lazy afternoons of pina coladas and grilled snapper, as well as Canadian science guru David Suzuki and South African songstress Miriam Makeba (presumably not together).

Ratcheting up the luxe factor in floral-printed swimming trunks, British Prime Minister Tony Blair prefers his accommodations on the yacht Good Vibrations, the residence of choice for the Blair clan during summer vacation. Back on land, they hang their hats in the ritzy villa owned by pal British super-star Sir Richard Cliff — the first rocker to be knighted, ahead of Sirs Paul and Elton.

A world away from politics, but royalty in her own right, sexy Bajan-born superstar Rihanna chills on the powdery white sand along Accra Beach. Discovered by music producer Evan Rogers, who also worked his magic with Christina Aguilera and *NSYNC, she caught the eye of Def Jam Records big shot Jay-Z who signed her on first glance and parachuted her punchy dance hit "Pon de Replay" to instant stardom.

Some say the prize for nightlife goes to Club Xtreme in Christ Church, but if you're not up for foam parties, there are other options. Spotting party-hearty celebrities like Cate Blanchett, Dido, Minnie Driver, Hugh Grant and Liam Gallagher is part of the charm of the St. Lawrence Gap hip strip, with weekend nights so jam-packed, traffic is reduced to a crawl. Pubs like the Ship Inn and McBride's, and clubs like After Dark and Reggae Lounge attract a party crowd while the

CONTINUED ON: 40

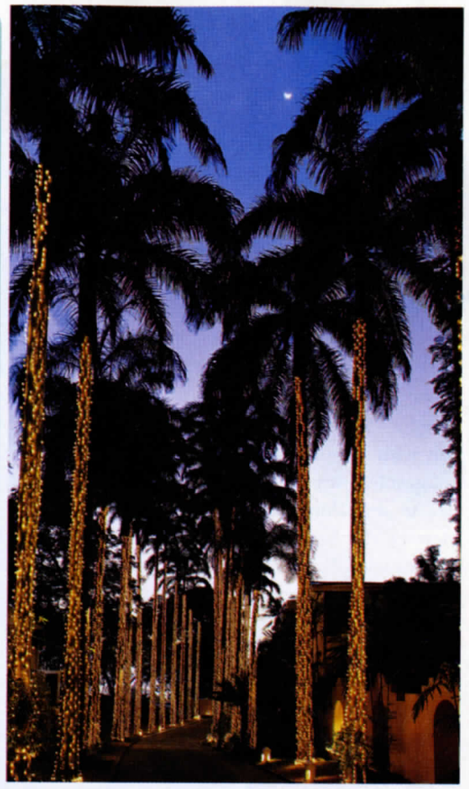
SPICE OF LIFE

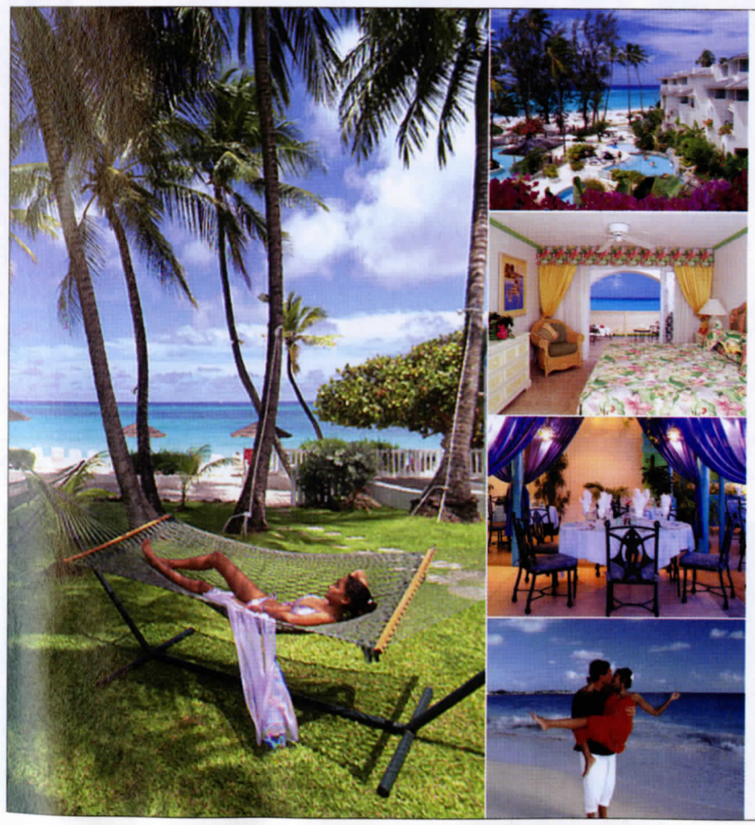
Bajan flavour is second nature for seasoned chef Sophie Beckles

- 450 grams onions, coarsely chopped
- 150 grams green onions, coarsely chopped
- 8 cloves garlic
- 4 Scotch bonnet peppers, stemmed and seeded
- 50 grams fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 50 grams fresh thyme, stems removed
- 50 grams fresh marjoram, stems removed
- 1 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons salt

In a food processor, combine onions, green onions, garlic and peppers and process into a coarse paste. Transfer mixture to a medium bowl. In food processor, place parsley, thyme, marjoram and vinegar; liquefy and add to onion paste. Add remaining ingredients; mix well. Cover and refrigerate for one week before using. It will keep, chilled, for six months.

Chef Sophie Beckles of Almond Beach Village
www.almondresorts.com





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Absolut Watering Hole is a karaoke bar with seasoned gentlemen sporting colourful African garb and tourists who like to sing along. With the single best view of the Sea, the Careenage Bar at the swanky Bridgetown Hilton showcases calypso, soca and reggae and is a magnet for corporate execs from Air Canada who peruse their spread sheets at the pool bar.

The only dinner-and-stage show in Barbados, Bajan Roots and Rhythms at the Plantation Theatre, dishes up the flavours of island arts and culture. This extravaganza with flamboyant costumes, quick-on-the-feet choreography and the red-hot excitement of a fire-eater and flaming limbo dancer kick off with the sweet sounds of the steel pan while you feast on a host of Bajan treats. And when the sun sets, Tuckaway Ice Cream Parlour in Paynes Bay scoops home-made flavours like nutmeg, soursop and cinnamon. "Ask for a sample," says Khanese Cadogen, who works behind the counter of the lime-green chattel house. "One scoop is never enough."

Life, as they say in Barbados, is too short to skip dessert. ■

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www.hiltoncaribbean.com/barbados

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www.thelonestar.com/aboutus.htm

Mango Bay Resort
www.mangobaybarbados.com

Enid's Cooking School
www.almondresorts.com

The Fish Pot
www.littlegoodharbourbarbados.com

Bajan Roots and Rhythms:
http://theplantation.bb/

Barbados on the Water (page 54)

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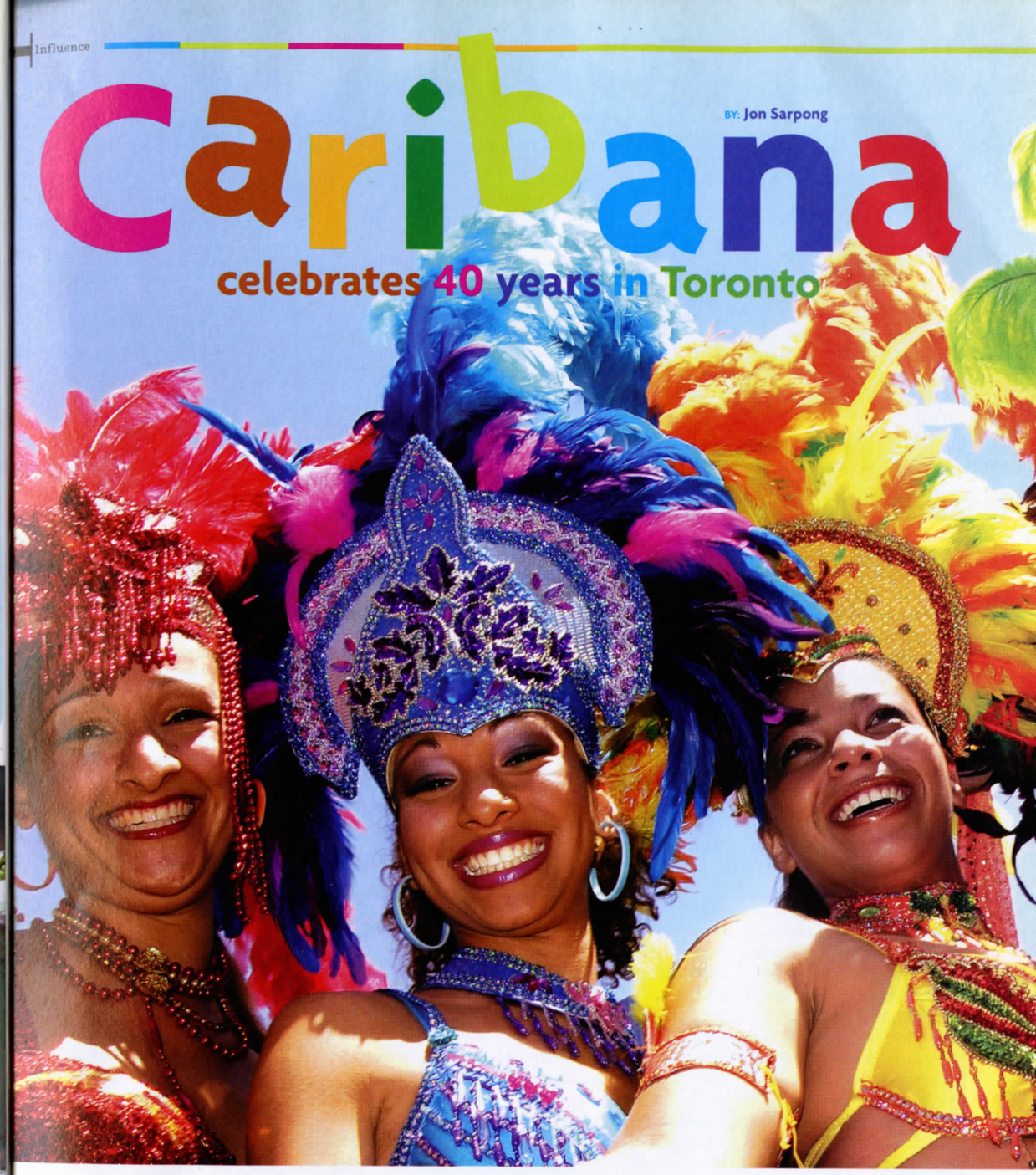
Caribana

BY: Jon Sarpong

celebrates 40 years in Toronto



Once-embattled festival now celebrated as the jewel of Canada's cultural events

THE FIRST QUESTION as Caribana celebrates its 40th anniversary is, simply, how did this festival, once mired in political wrangling, organizational infighting and economic controversy, survive for four decades?

Joe Halstead, chair of the city-appointed Festival Management Committee, the group at the helm of all things Caribana, answers without hesitation. What he doesn't say — that the struggle to bring stability to North America's largest cultural showcase has been tough — reveals as much about the secret of the festival's longevity as what he does say.

"Caribana has developed over 40 years to become the pre-eminent festival in the city,

Cover Story

and certainly in the North American continent," Halstead happily relates. "All of this is really because Caribana is the essence of diversity and community. It is at the heart of what we are in this city — it is the essence of Toronto."

This year marks not only the 40th anniversary of Caribana, but also the second year of a striking turnaround for the festival. In 2006, the City of Toronto withdrew its funding from the Caribbean Cultural Committee, the group at the helm of previous Caribana festivals, alleging financial mismanagement. In its place, it appointed the Festival Management Committee to run the event, incorporating members from various interested parties, such as the Toronto Mas Band Association. Although this organizational transition initially drew the ire of a handful of detractors, last year's festival attracted 1.2 million people.

"Caribana is a very good brand. Yes, it has had its problems, but we're over that now — that was in the past," Halstead emphasizes. "Since last year, we've been working to demonstrate our responsibility to the sponsors and community. We've had more corporate sponsors step up to the plate because they feel that being a part of the parade is good for their business. We have to look at Caribana as a $300 million business. In those terms, every person can understand the long-term importance of the festival to all communities in the city of Toronto."

Halstead's attempt to bring transparency, accountability and responsibility to Caribana has already paid off. The 2006 Caribana festival managed to generate revenues of $912,000 and expenses of $903,000. The $9,000 in profit marked a stark contrast with previous years, in which the festival either lost money or failed to produce a financial audit. This year, corporate sponsors are beating a path to Halstead's door, aiming to connect with Caribana's phenomenally large audience. In early February of this year, corporate sponsors, government officials, and members of the Festival Management Committee gathered together to announce a new slew of sponsors including Roots Canada, CTV and Molson, with early pledge amounts totaling approximately $100,000.

"In January, in previous years, we have not had this amount of support this early on," says Councillor Joe Mihevc, who, as the city's liaison to the event, is intimately familiar with Caribana's past difficulties and issues, which yearly drew into question whether the celebration would even take place. "Unlike previous festivals, we know ... there will be a festival."

With all systems go, Halstead and his group aim to give the 40th edition of Caribana a panoramic presence within the GTA and have developed a series of initiatives to increase participation and create opportunities for younger members of the community to take on leadership roles within Caribana's organization.

Joe Halstead

"It is my fervent hope that we can truly bring about some leaders to run this festival so that it will leave a legacy for the people in this city, and a place to understand the history of the bands, mas, calypso, soca, and everything that makes Caribbean culture so engaging," Halstead says.

With the organization in order, all indications are that this year's festival will take the annual celebration to a new level.

"It's going to be bigger and better for the 40th," says an excited Halstead. "We're bringing in Sean Paul to perform at the Molson Amphitheatre. Not only that, we're also going to have an exhibit of Caribbean-themed paintings on display for over two weeks at the Blue Dot Gallery. Also for the 40th, we're reintroducing the Caribana Ball. We'd moved away from it in the last 10 years — but we're bringing it back and that is going to be at the Royal York Hotel. Our events are also moving beyond the boundaries of downtown Toronto, with a series of concerts in the park taking place in Scarborough and one in Mississauga. Regardless of your age and/or your cultural interests, this year's festival has got you covered. My plea to the community is to support Caribana — come out and enjoy it because this festival is all about community — this festival is about us." ■

Caribana planner

There is something for everyone at this year's Caribana festival. Take a look at these great events and plan to be amazed while participating in this panoramic collection of all things Caribbean!

Official Launch
Nathan Phillips Square
Tuesday July 10, 2007

The official ceremony launches the Caribana Festival season. Patrons can meet and mingle with federal, provincial and municipal officials, Caribana representatives and sponsors while sampling Caribbean and international cuisine.

Junior Carnival
Yorkgate Mall
Saturday July 21, 2007

The Junior Carnival provides festivalgoers and the surrounding community the opportunity to experience thrills and joys as young masqueraders participate in their earlier festival years.

Theatre Activity/Cultural Singing/Dance Drumming
Albert Campbell Square
Sunday July 22, 2007

This event will highlight the various cultures of all of the Caribbean people. It will include a food competition, theatrical performances and storytelling.

Art Exhibition
Blue Dot Gallery, Distillery District
Tuesday July 24, 2007-Monday August 6, 2007

A visual Art Exhibition "COLOURblind! International" produced by "The Association of African Canadian Artists" — over 60 original paintings and sculptures that have been influenced by the diversity of a people.

Calypso Monarch Finals
Toronto Centre for the Arts
Saturday July 28, 2007

Come and see the best and biggest Canadian calypsonians battle for the crown. From the topical to the lyrical, the sweet soca rhythms will get you moving.

Caribana Village
Ontario Place
August 1-August 6, 2007

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Caribana and 200 years since the abolition of the British slave trade, Caribana Village will highlight our liberation through song, music, dance, drama and comedy. Vendors of food, craft, clothing and art will add to the island vibe ambiance generating delectable aroma and vibrant colours to warm up Lake Ontario throughout the five-day event.

King & Queen
Lamport Stadium
Thursday August 2, 2007

On the Thursday night before Caribana Day, all the kings and queens of the bands meet to do battle. Like peacocks they will primp and preen, eliciting ohs and ahs from the audience.

Pan Alive
Lamport Stadium
Friday August 3, 2007

A thrilling evening showcasing the musical and tonal qualities of the steelpan as members of the Ontario Steelband Association compete before a panel of judges.

Caribana Ball
The Fairmont Royal York
Friday August 3, 2007

An evening of style, glamour and pomp, celebrating Caribana's 40th anniversary

Caribana Parade
Exhibition Place
Saturday August 4, 2007

This showcase event features an incredible display of colours and pageantry along a 3.6 kilometre parade route on Lakeshore Boulevard.

Arts & Cultural Performance
Ontario Place
Sunday August 5, 2007

Catch the coolest vibes and groove to the best in local and international music as renowned and accomplished artists perform the beats, sounds and songs that have made the islands famous the world

And the "Beat" continues — JAZZ
Location: TBA
Thursday August 9, 2007-Sunday August 12, 2007

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at home with:

Christopher Estridge

BY: Damian Rogers Belitsky PHOTOGRAPHY: David Waldman

"I'VE NEVER MET an animal print I didn't like," purrs artist, fashion designer and — most recently — hip-hop impresario Christopher Estridge as he lounges amongst zebra throw pillows in his penthouse apartment atop a landmark building in Yorkville. He and his husband, John Bailey, a former President of Famous Players and current trustee of Alliance Atlantis, have been living in these light-drenched rooms-with-a-view since moving to Toronto in 1992. Estridge's natural wild side is evident throughout the couple's home, which is jam-packed with an ever-changing arrangement of paintings, sculptures, *objets d'art* and curios; every corner holds a surprise and every piece comes with a story. There's the peace pipe that they picked up on a trip to Vancouver Island hanging near the Warhol they've had for years, which is hanging near a couple Estridge originals that the artist finished painting earlier in the week. As we talk, he touches up the shuttered kitchen doors that he has covered with dismantled picture frames and painted all black — it's his homage to American sculptor Louise Nevelson.

Art is everywhere — even the kitchen and the bathrooms have work by big names like photographer Wee Gee and graffiti artist Keith Haring — but this is hardly a stuffy museum or showroom. Guests are encouraged to interact with the environment by running a hand over the cool organic surface of a ceramic work by Gisela Wittenberg (who shows at Trias Gallery in Toronto, which also represents Estridge) or opening a box by American artist Barton Benes (who Estridge collects). The overall effect is one of movement, play and engaged creative energy. Inspired by their time in Los Angeles, where he and Bailey lived before moving to Toronto, New York–native Estridge has kept the furniture and carpet in shades of white and beige, which provides an airy foundation for the constant flow of activity that takes place in the penthouse. And as the studio and headquarters for Ghetto Panda, the fashion line/record label he runs with business partner Bryan Van Dusen, the place sees lots of activity. Naturally, there's inspiration everywhere.

Estridge is a true renaissance man, multi-talented and blessed with an enthusiasm for experimentation and a genuine love of life. He remembers working as a stockboy at Bergdorf Goodman's fur department back in the day, and one of his bosses asking him, "Christopher, what exactly is it that you want to do?" When Estridge said simply that he wanted to be an artist, his boss asked, "Well, then why don't you just do it?" Estridge quit his job two weeks later and started bringing his then-unfashionable collage pieces to SoHo galleries who were only interested in minimalism. Soon he was decorating the interior of the first generation of disco "juice bars." By the time Studio 54 opened, he laughs, "we'd already been dancing for seven or eight years." Solo shows followed and Estridge has always been happy to try something new, work in a different medium and reinvent his style.

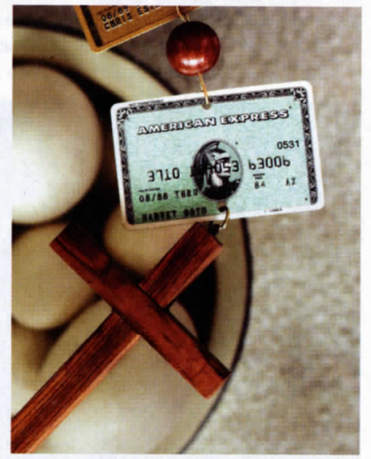
The mix of Africana, Canadiana and Asian themes in his decorating reflects Estridge's many interests and experiences. "I love different cultures," he says. Large wooden Buddhas look perfectly at ease beside a carved loon bowl by Cree artist Erroll Ashley; a Lalique aluminum compact looks natural beside a clay-cast paw print of his beloved dog, Oscar, who passed away last year. Estridge's infectious warmth infuses the entire penthouse so that everything connects together beautifully and, like his own work, offers a gently challenging yet open celebration of earthly life.

Estridge displays a comically oversized wooden crucifix that he made using some of his old credit cards as beads. "People say that money is the root of all evil," he says, "but money can be a road to happiness, depending on how you use it."

Seeing the artist surrounded by art, basking in the sun of his rooftop terrace, it's hard to argue. ■

MORE INFO ON GHETTO PANDA ON PAGE 46

Home decor



what is ghetto panda?

WEAR IT
"I originally wanted to be a fashion designer, but didn't stick with it," says Christopher Estridge. Well, it just goes to show that it's never too late to go back to an old love. When Estridge and Bryan Van Dusen began working collaboratively on creative projects, fashion became an obvious part of the equation. Equal parts flamboyant, fun and foxy, their spring 2007 collection includes long coats in faux-snake ("No snakes were harmed in the making of this coat!") in colours like metallic gold, pale pink and a sandy beige, and a jewellery line that screams go big or go home with super-sized amethysts, silver-cast seashells and baroque pearls.

HEAR IT
Van Dusen describes his narrative-driven songs as "hip-hop inspired pop fusion." Estridge signed on as Executive Producer on "Don't Try This At Home," Van Dusen's second CD release, after hearing him freestyling to Gershwin at a piano bar. "I thought, this isn't just rap. This is something different." Scarborough-bred Van Dusen inverts rap stereotypes by singing about the beat-up LeBaron he and his brother drove around the old neighbourhood and anecdotes about suburban life. "I write about things that happen to me."

LIVE IT
Ghetto Panda actually started out making masks for a charity event and you can still see these creations online at ghettopanda.com. They have also put their minds to designing upscale, one-of-a-kind dog beds called Sweet Doggie Dreams that are meant to be both functional and decorative pieces. The Ghetto Panda vibe is all about attitude without pretension and flash that will last.

Home decor

Surface Up

Summer accessories run the gamut from high-gloss to matte

BY: Terese Sears

MOTHER NATURE
Borrowing from the textures and forms found in nature, Michael Aram's Enchanted Forest side table in polished aluminium is sublime enough for even the most hardened urban dweller.

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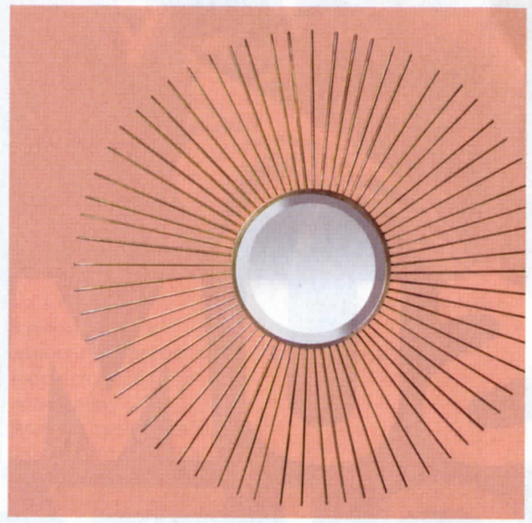
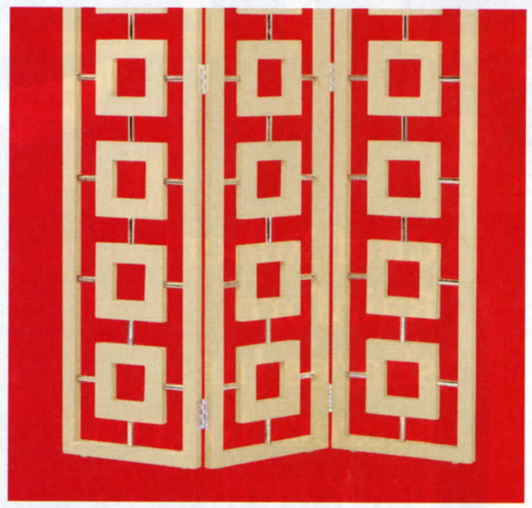


MIRROR MIRROR
Oly's striking take on the sunburst theme will add a ray of hope to any wall. Stylish and glamorous, it's all about reflecting the good life.

Fiona mirror, $1620, South Hill Home. 200 Dupont St. 416-924-7224.



RETRO REVISITED
Nobody does retro like Jonathan Adler. Maybe that's because he happily combs the world's design archives for inspiration. His glossy white lacquered screen has a certain "Love to love you baby" '70s quality.

$1299, Mi Casa, 238 Carlton St. 416-929-1913.

SUMMER SIZZLE

Chef Robert Rainford shares his secrets to great backyard barbeques

BY: Pamella Bailey

ROB RAINFORD CERTAINLY knows his way around a grill. As host of The Food Network Canada's *License to Grill*, the Jamaican-born chef has kept the sizzle in backyard barbeques for more than 100 episodes. "Low and slow," says Rainford over the phone, "at least three to four hours." He's referring to the best method of grilling tender, succulent ribs. Apparently it's all about sustained heat at low temperatures.

A graduate of the culinary program at George Brown College, Rainford admits he fell into grilling haphazardly. "It wasn't something I set out to do. I didn't own a barbeque before I did the show," he jokes, "I worked on a grill for 10 years indoors and applied the same skills to it outdoors."

With his classical training in fine dining, Rainford has honed his skills in some of Toronto's best kitchens, including Kensington Kitchen and Senses; skills that have influenced his approach to cooking, be it at the grill or in a fine dining establishment. "You need to be organized and sequenced when it comes to cooking, so it all comes together at the end. That's how a chef cooks," says Rainford. That's a message he teaches in Food Theory classes at George Brown College's Continuing Education program, and one he's about to teach now in his guide to grilling the perfect ribs.

First, the marinade. "Marinating overnight will infuse flavour and tenderize the meat," says Rainford. "I love working with booze. This is where my Caribbean side comes out. Add cinnamon sticks and onions to dark rum for a great marinade." Rainford advises grilling on low indirect heat for two-and-a-half to three hours for pork ribs and three to four hours for beef ribs. Use wood chips such as apple, cherry, oak or hickory to infuse flavour. Two parts wet (soak for two hours until the wood chips become waterlogged), and one part dry. "It's the smoking of the woodchips that gives off great flavour."

Part of throwing a great barbeque is leaving time to enjoy it. "Most people want to barbeque everything when their guests arrive so food is hot off the grill," says Rainford. "But people don't care about piping hot food so do what you can ahead of time and heat things up as your guests arrive."

A father of three, Rainford enjoys cooking at home, a place where his family has a healthy respect for the grill. He credits his older brother, Harold, and twin brother, Richard, (who can't boil water to save his life), with supporting him through tough career decisions that have landed him where he is today.

Always striving for the next level, Rainford won't claim to be a master of the grill. "Any good chef will tell you they are continuously on the road to mastering their craft. I'm a voracious reader of cookbooks, and food and wine articles," says Rainford. His favourite dish? "I love my beef tenderloin and lobster with citrusy butter and garlic. You just know you're having a slice of heaven." ■

Recipe

Spicy Ribs with Pineapple-Rum Glaze

RECIPE BY: Rob Rainford

RUB:
1 cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon dried thyme
1 tablespoon chili powder
3 racks pork baby back ribs

RIB BBQ SAUCE:
2 cups pineapple juice
2 tablespoons hot pepper sauce
1 tablespoon minced ginger
1/2 cup ketchup
4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
4 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon ground black pepper

PINEAPPLE-RUM GLAZE:
2 cups pineapple juice
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 cup unsalted butter
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
3/4 cup Jamaican rum

TO MAKE RUB: In bowl, combine rub ingredients mix well. Rub mixture all over ribs; place in large sealable food-storage bag. Marinate in refrigerator 4 hours.

TO MAKE GLAZE: In saucepan, combine glaze ingredients. Bring to boil; reduce heat. Simmer to thicken sauce and reduce by half its volume.

TO MAKE BBQ SAUCE: In saucepan, combine juice, hot pepper sauce and ginger. Bring to boil; reduce heat to medium. Add remaining ingredients; continue cooking until slightly thick.

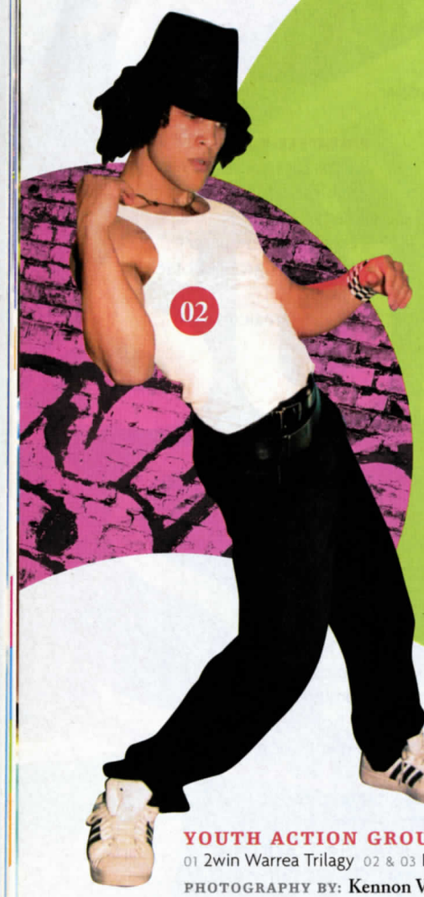
Remove ribs from storage bag; bring to room temperature and rub the prepared mixture into the meat. Prepare grill for indirect grilling; heat to high on one side. If using charcoal, wait until coals have turned to white ash.

To add flavour, mix two parts woodchips soaked in water for at least 30 minutes and one part dry wood chips. When cooking with charcoal, sprinkle the chips right on the coals. For a gas grill, place the wet and dry wood chips on a large piece of aluminum foil. Fold and seal the foil into a packet. Pierce it with a fork, making small holes in the top and bottom for smoke to escape. Place the packet under the grilling racks. Bring your barbecue up to a high heat, and watch for the smoke.

Place ribs over high heat and sear. Reduce heat to 200°F/100°C; close lid. Cook about 2 hours, turning ribs after 1 hour. Baste with glaze for remaining 45 minutes. Remove ribs from grill; let rest 15 minutes before cutting. Serve with BBQ sauce.

Serves 8. Per serving: 760 calories, 50 grams fat, 194 milligrams cholesterol, 1,200 milligrams sodium, 32 grams carbohydrate, 39 grams protein.

Sway was there



YOUTH ACTION GROUP

Metro Hall was the scene of the Urban Youth Showcase. As part of International Youth Week, the Youth Action Network, a not-for-profit, youth-for-youth charitable organization to benefit young people to get active in the social and environmental movement, hosted this event that included performances by Street Dreama, Heavy Steve, OBU and L.Vision.

YOUTH ACTION GROUP

01 2win Warrea Trilagy 02 & 03 Dancers 04 The Voyce and friend 05 L. Vision

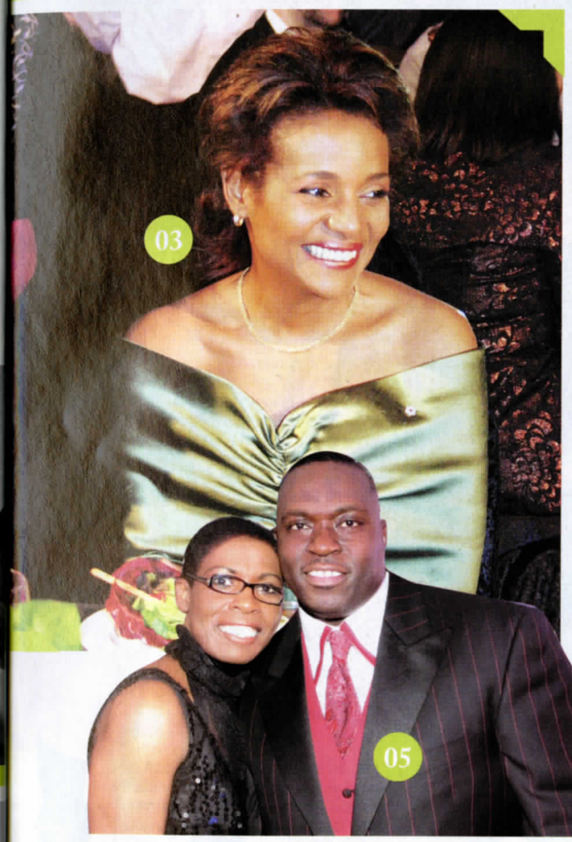
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **Kennon Vaughan**

BLACK BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

HARRY JEROME AWARDS, 25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

01 Damon Allen, Marci Ien 02 John Tory and friend 03 Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean 04 Chief Emmanuel C. Mbulu 05 Pauline Christian and Farley Flex.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **Dragana Maslakovich**

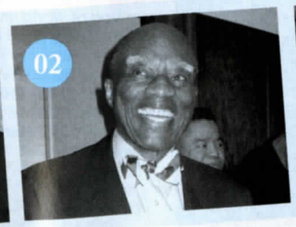


ARTHUR C. DOWNES SECOND CHANCE LIBRARY

Cocktail reception and book drive at the home of Zanana Akande to celebrate the opening of the Arthur C. Downes Second Chance Library at the Brookside Youth Centre (Cobourg, Ontario).

01 Florence Klotz (left) and Esther Daniel 02 Authur C. Downes 03 Zanana Akande

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **Melissa Bessey**



KELLY ROWLAND AT THE FASHION CARES BENEFIT FOR THE AIDS COMMITTEE OF TORONTO

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PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE.

COMPILED BY: Gifty Gymiah

American Idol's Simon Cowell, Randy Jackson

Mary J. Blige

Pride Toronto: Unstoppable
Friday June 15 – Sunday June 24
This year's celebrations include the 'Colour Me Dragg' showcase, featuring drag king Milo de Milo and burlesque performers Nestle Chocolat & Tina Timebalm. Various venues, free and ticketed events.
www.pridetoronto.com

International Caribbean Business Fair
Saturday June 16 – Sunday June 17
Members of the Caribbean business community showcase their products to the mainstream Canadian community. Free event. International Centre, 6900 Airport Road, Exhibit Hall 5.
www.icbf.ca

Polo For Heart
Friday June 22 – Sunday June 24
Now in its 28th year, this annual event for the Heart & Stroke Foundation sees some of the world's top-ranked players competing from as far away as Barbados. Activities include face painting and a polo pony parade plus a chance to win one of five trips to Barbados! $15 for adults; free for kids 12 and under. Gormley Polo Centre, 13401 Leslie St. www.poloforheart.org

TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival
Friday June 22 – Monday July 2
Back for its 20th year, the TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival plans to celebrate in a big way by featuring artists such as Mavis Staples, Chris Botti and Holly Cole. Various ticket prices and locations. www.tojazz.com

Barbados Day at Woodbine
Saturday June 23
Feel the pulse of Bajun culture when champion jockeys from Barbados take on the best that Canada has to offer. The two featured races are the Incitatus Cup and the Barbados Steady Growth Stakes Race with a purse of $125,000. For more info, visit woodbineentertainment.com

Miss Queen of the Islands Pageant
Saturday June 23
Pageantry and presentation will be on display as over 20 young women delight the audience with beauty and talent. 7pm. $40. Capitol Event Theatre, 2492 Yonge St.
www.missqueenoftheislands.ca

Ice Cream Summer Fest
Saturday June 30
The summer concert is an old-school R&B lover's dream come true. New Edition (hopefully without Bobby Brown) along with SWV, Donell Jones, Carl Thomas and Jagged Edge. Don't forget your dancing shoes. 4:30pm. $65-$99.50. Molson Amphitheatre, 909 Lakeshore Blvd. W.
www.ticketmaster.com

Afrofest
Saturday July 7 – Sunday July 8
This two-day festival showcases the beauty and diversity of African cultures through music, dance, food and crafts. Free. Queen's Park, University Ave. and Wellesley Ave.
www.musicafrica.org

World Routes 2007
All summer long
Giants of every kind of world music, including African masters Seun Kuti and Egypt 80 and Toumani Diabate's Symmetric Orchestra; Jamaican superstar Barrington Levy; hip-hop funk ambassadors Sa-Ra Creative Partners; indie faves Do Make Say Think, Emily Haines and Soft Skeleton and Final Fantasy. Most events are free. Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W.
www.harbourfrontcentre.com

Beyoncé

Justin Timberlake

The Caribana Festival
Sunday July 8 – Thursday August 9
North America's biggest jump-up turns 40 this year; and the Caribana festival has never looked better. This year's celebrations feature a concert headlined by none other than Sean Paul. Ticketed and free events. Various times and locations. (See cover story on page 41.)

Musiq Soulchild
Thursday July 12
R&B crooner Musiq Soulchild hits the Toronto stage with his dynamic blend of hip-hop, funk and neo-soul. 9pm. $29.50. Phoenix Theatre, 410 Sherbourne. www.ticketmaster.ca

Guru's Jazzmatazz
Sunday July 15
Hip-hop pioneer Guru brings his jazz inflected b-boy sensibilities back to Toronto with super producer Solar, DJ Doowop and the 7 Grand Band. 9pm. $29.50. The Mod Club Theatre, 722 College St. www.ticketmaster.ca

Mary J Blige
Wednesday July 25
The queen of hip-hop soul brings her Grammy-winning vocals to Casino Rama for a one-night-only show. 8pm. $98.60– $110.20. Casino Rama, R.R. #6 Rama Rd., Orillia. www.ticketmaster.ca

Global Hip Hop: The Four Elements
Friday July 27 – Saturday July 29
Hip-hop started out in the park, so it's fitting to celebrate hip-hop culture at Harbourfront, Toronto's playground. This too-cool-for-words festival focuses on the global impact of hip-hop culture through music and live dance performances. All day. Free. Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay West. www.harbourfrontcentre.com

KC & The Sunshine Band
Thursday August 2 – Friday August 3
Dance the night away as disco icons, KC & The Sunshine Band perform their chart-topping hits such as: "(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty," "Boogie Shoes," and "Get Down Tonight." 8:30pm. $31.80-42.40. Fallsview Casino Resort, 6380 Fallsview Boulevard, Niagara Falls.
www.ticketmaster.ca

Beyoncé
Wednesday August 15
She's a singer, model and Oscar-nominated actress. The very talented Beyoncé brings her bootylicious style back to Toronto for a music extravaganza. $65.50-$115.50. Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay St.
www.ticketmaster.ca

American Idols Live!
Tuesday August 14
Melinda, Blake, Jordan and the rest of gang visit the ACC in support of Idol domination. 7pm. $40.75-$72.75. Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay Street.
www.ticketmaster.ca

Billy Ocean
Tuesday August 14 – Wednesday August 15
Grammy award-winning R&B performer best known for chart-topping hits: "Caribbean Queen (No More Love on the Run)," "There'll Be Sad Songs (To Make You Cry)" and "Get Outta My Dreams, Get Into My Car," brings his signature sound to the Casino Rama stage. 8pm. $29.00-$34.80. Casino Rama, R.R. #6 Rama Rd., Orillia.
www.ticketmaster.ca

Justin Timberlake Futuresex/loveshow
Monday August 20 – Tuesday August 21
He's bringing sexy back! Grammy Award-winner Justin Timberlake returns to Toronto with his energetic music showcase. 7:30pm. $64.25-$124.00. Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay St.
www.ticketmaster.ca

Caribbean Week Toronto
Wednesday September 26 – Sunday September 30
The Caribbean Tourism Organization offers up the sights, sounds, colours, and culture of the unique vacation attractions of the Caribbean. Plan your next vacation by touring this panoramic spectacle. Various locations, ticketed and free events.
www.caribbeanweek.ca.

Barbados On The Water
Friday June 15 – Sunday June 17
&
Emancipation Celebration Festival
Friday August 3 – Sunday August 5
See page 54.

Barbados on the Water June 15 - 17

Coinciding with the 40th Anniversary of the independence of Barbados, this summer festival, developed in partnership with the Barbados Tourism Authority and the Consulate General of Barbados, is the most authentic celebration of Barbadian culture. The occasion calls for food, festivities and fun. For more information and the schedule of free events, times and locations, visit: www.harbourfrontcentre.com

Pampalam Friday June 15 - Saturday June 16, 7pm
What started 30 years ago at a little theatre in Bridgetown is now the longest-running stage show in Barbados. The enduring comedy is a satirical revue of Bajan life. $15 Brigantine Room.

Rupee with NeuJenarashun Friday June 15
Atlantic recording artist and soca music ambassador to Canada performs his intoxicating melodies. NeuJenarashun's high-energy soca music opens. 9pm. $35. Harbourfront Centre Concert Stage.

Monarchs with Boogie Knights Band
Friday, June 15 - Saturday, June 16, 11pm
The Boogie Knights Band will back up six of the outstanding Calypso Monarchs — The Mighty Gabby, Serenader, T.C., Biggie Irie, Kid Site and Natalie. Led by John Roett, this is immensely experienced and authentic Calypso. $30. Brigantine Room.

The 145th Emancipation Festival August 3 - 5

Celebrate the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade by taking part in the Emancipation Festival 2007. This annual event, which takes place in the city of Owen Sound, Ontario, pays homage to the brave legacy of African slaves, who attained their freedom by journeying into Canada along the Underground Railroad. This year, guests of the Emancipation Festival will enjoy several engaging activities.

Speakers Forum *Community, Roots & Culture - Perspectives*
Friday August 3, 7pm - 9:30pm
Special guests Lawrence Hill and Afua Cooper dialogue with community activists, members and partners.

Homecoming Parade Saturday August 4, 10am
Jubilation fills downtown Owen Sound as the Homecoming parade makes its way through town. Highlights include: Emancipation Celebration 145th Anniversary Float, Joaquin Nunez Hidalgo Afro/Cuban Band, Adventure Tour Cyclists and more!

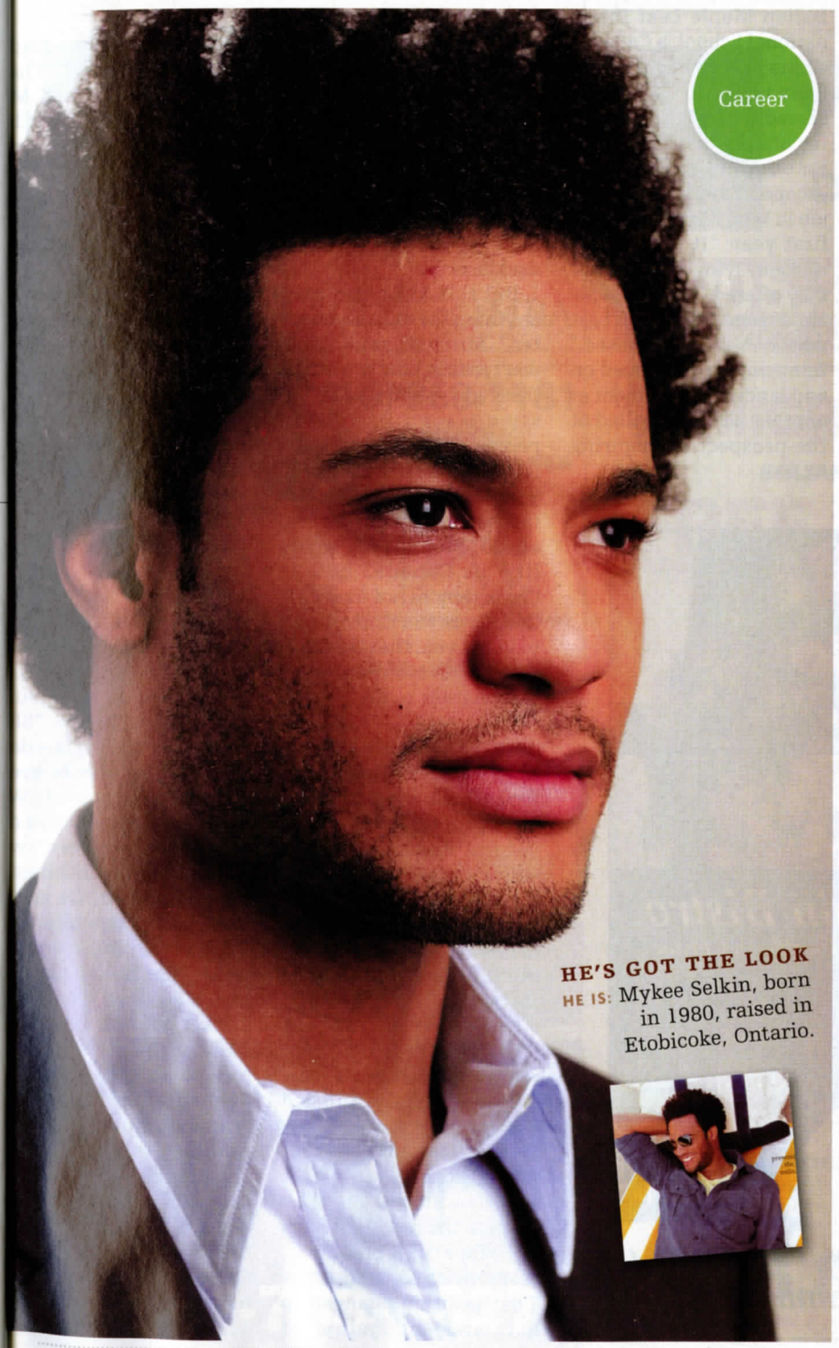
145th Emancipation Celebration Picnic Saturday August 4, 1pm – 11pm
This picnic is one of Canada's best kept secrets. If you've never toured the ECP, join in this year and take in live music, games, crafts, storytelling, a Black History Exhibit and the R&B, Soul, and Jazz showcase, featuring Liberty Silver, Demo Catz, Eugene Smith, Blackburn and Bearcats.

BME Gospel Explosion Sunday August 5, 10am
Join gospel musicians, choirs, and *Canadian Idol* participant Gary Beales as the Emancipation Festival closes out with a gospel shakedown at Owen Sound's BME church.

Don't miss out on what is sure to be one of the summer's premiere events. For more information on the 145th Edition of the Emancipation Festival, visit: www.emancipation.ca.

EXODUS
BLACK CANADIANS FINDING SUCCESS ABROAD

BY: Saada Branker



HE'S GOT THE LOOK
HE IS: Mykee Selkin, born in 1980, raised in Etobicoke, Ontario.

THE JOB: Male model and aspiring actor in New York, New York, USA

MOVED IN: 2003. Selkin was working the aisles of an Ikea furniture store when a man approached him, claiming to be from the Toronto office of the renowned Ford Modeling Agency. "I was apprehensive at first and brushed it off," says Selkin. "Then another agent came over."

WORK MANDATE: "I started working almost right away and haven't looked back since," says the former George Brown marketing student. Selkin's fine features have graced ad campaigns for J. Crew, The Gap, Dockers, and Tommy Hilfiger. "My day consists of going to casting calls to procure new contracts with new clients, communicating with existing clients, then going the gym," explains Selkin. Twice a day he checks in with his agent for updates.

REBOUNDING: Yoga, he explains, keeps him strong and clears his head, "so I'm not caught up." Striking new and stronger poses requires focus. "People think being a model means you're not intelligent. But right off the bat, we've become our own business." That business can generate lucrative earnings (up to US$100,000 or more) for male models that nail the right look.

MEMORY IMPRINT: "It feels good knowing my image is in a magazine and knowing that the next generation can see that we black male models do exist. It's my one small contribution," says Selkin who also attended Esper Studios to train as an actor.

BEING BLACK THERE: "Being in the

CONTINUED ON: 56

FROM PAGE: 55

New York modeling and acting scene, you see so many different cultures."

INSTRUCTING THINGS

HE IS: Fimo Mitchell, born in 1978, raised in Montreal, Quebec

THE JOB: English instructor in Dalian, China. In 2006, Mitchell also wrote and self-published *Lost or Found* — his first novel, which relates the story of a black male growing up in Montreal.

MOVED IN: 2002. A Concordia University journalism graduate, Mitchell realized job opportunities were scarce in Montreal. China became a top choice when Mitchell spotted a teaching post that paid $500 per month for a 10-12 hour work week.

WORK MANDATE: "I teach grade eight. I have 12 different classes, seeing students twice a week. I provide them the skills to be able to communicate efficiently in English," Mitchell says of his job at Dalian Maple Leaf International School, a Canada-China joint venture that has a high school program accredited by B.C.'s Ministry of Education.

REBOUNDING: Mitchell escaped from his original job in Wen Zhou during his first year. "It was a case of them lying about what they offered," he says of his employers. "They didn't get me the Visa they promised." Immediately he moved on and landed employment at another school, thrilled at the prospect of inspiring conscientious students to do well.

> "I teach grade eight. I have 12 differen classes, seeing students twice a week I provide them the skills to be able t communicate efficiently in English"
>
> – Fimo Mitchell, English instructor in Dalian, Chi

MEMORY IMPRINT: "When I left the first year, one kid came to me — he was not a good student, kind of lazy. He opened his mouth and said, 'please don't forget me.' He even gave me a necklace.

But this kid never said anything the entire semester," Mitchell says. "You don't realize how you affect these guys, but you do."

BEING BLACK THERE: Black people can advance a lot faster in China, he says. "If you can do the job, learn the language, you can get ahead. Stereotypes exist, like in Canada, but in China they're not irreversible. Once the Chinese get to know you, that thinking changes. In Montreal, it's a little harder to do."

THE WRITE STUFF

HE IS: Robert Edison Sandiford, born in 1968, raised in Montreal, Quebec.

THE JOB: Freelance writer, editor and author in Christ Church, Barbados. Sandiford is also co-founder of *ArtsEtc.*, an arts and literature periodical available throughout the island.

MOVED IN: 1996. The year Sandiford was set to marry his Bajan fiancée, he successfully queried her island's newspaper, *The Nation*, for a columnist position.

WORK MANDATE: "In '97 I became the associate literary editor doing art and literary reviews and features. That position changed to arts and entertainment editor before I was ma redundant in 2001. Th was the year from hell. I father was declining and died in early 2002. The was family drama. A then there was 9/11."

REBOUNDING: After losing j job, Sandiford found hi self reassessing his care choices. "So we took t severance. I told mys I've got this talent. Wh is my material?" The Baj son describes his mu — "looking at the spac in between, in terms o Canada-Barbados fusion

MEMORY IMPRINT: To da this acclaimed writ has published six boo attracting accolade including the Barbad Governer General's Awa His latest: *Shouts From T Outfield*, a cricket anth ogy developed with jou nalist Linda Deane. "S and I were talking one d about doing more to ke our minds occupied. V found out cricket books well. There we were, t cricket know-nothing says Sandiford. He en sioned a literary collecti of voices illuminating t sport. "The book launch March 30 when World C Cricket got into gear."

BEING BLACK THERE: San ford takes pride in wh Barbadian artists ha produced, but encoura broader thinking. "I about being outside. Ab being in a particular pla but not being restricted that place. Writers in t Caribbean could do w more international exp sure to other writers."

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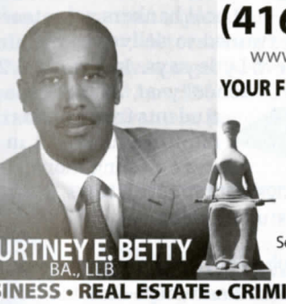

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Helping kids get a handle on money

BY: Saada Branker

"CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE." We hear the phrase so often we barely even stop to consider its implications. How much thought, for example, do we give to what our children understand about their own financial futures? If our kids are anything like their black cousins south of the border, the answer is grim: not much.

The American organization Jump$tart Coalition recently surveyed teenagers, asking 31 basic questions about personal finance, credit, and income. Black students scored the worst, securing only 40-50 per cent of the correct answers. According to Jump$tart's executive director, Laura Levine, students' financial literacy scores have remained low since 1997, averaging 52.4 per cent last year.

SPEND MORE, BUY BIG

Like their American cousins, African-Canadian teens are susceptible to the lure of shrewd mass marketers, but too many know too little about saving and managing money. Roy Reedon is a Toronto father to three girls ages 18, five and four. He says his teenager is surrounded by consumer enticements that pressure her to spend money. "The kids around her age are very materialistic, wanting $300 bags and expensive clothing," says Reedon, who works in product development. "It's all about the bling."

Maura Drew-Lytle of the Canadian Bankers Association confirms that this mindset is prevalent. "Some kids think money is limitless, that you get it out of the bank machine, but I don't think they understand that you have to put money in there in the first place."

For seven years, the CBA has put the idea of children's financial literacy into the public arena. "There's Something About Money" is its 75-minute, free, non-commercial money management seminar, offered to high school students in grades 10 and higher. Teachers can sign up online.

"Local bankers volunteer and are trained to deliver the seminar," Drew-Lytle says. In the 2005/2006 school year, 22,500 Canadian students from various communities took part in sessions detailing money management, interest rates, credit and student debt.

GIVING DUE CREDIT

In families where finances are not talked about, children have to figure out on their own how to handle money. Not good, say observers. Kids often take their cues from parents. Reedon points out that black people are great buyers of consumer goods, but not enough are investors in real estate. So kids think only short-term. Popular music and the social situation for some African-Canadians can play a role, Reedon says. "We prefer flash over substance."

Overall, Canadians in the past five years have been spending more freely, decreasing their level of personal savings. But our kids don't have to buy into that bad habit.

1. Start learning together early

"Banks on their websites have tools, like calculators. Teach kids about saving and compound interest," especially if they receive money for birthdays and chores," advises Drew-Lytle. "Teenagers," she adds, "should read the newspaper for insight on the economy."

2. Communicate about money

When parents are not comfortable about their financial affairs, they're less inclined to discuss money with the kids; but children learn by example and instruction. Reedon, who has already talked to his working teenager about taxes and value over cost, suggests parents make lessons fun. "Use examples relevant to their personal interests," he says.

3. Seek financial information and services.

The CBA offers a free series of money management publications for teens, adults and small businesses. Visit www.cba.ca or search online for Canadian financial resources.

FIVE TIPS FOR BANKING WITH YOUTH

1. Discuss financial aspirations as a family. Together, determine short- and long-term savings goals. If your 10-year-old child has $50 now, how much does she want to have when she turns 15? Does your teen want to risk incurring long-term debt by applying for a student loan when its time to go to university?
2. Consult with financial advisors. Start with community associations, libraries or neighbourhood workshops. Bring your questions about the services various banks offer to kids.
3. Determine the requirements. Visit a bank's website or call to find out what is needed when opening a youth account. Some banks request a legal guardian at registration. Also ask about the minimum deposit for opening accounts and any other restrictions banks may have.
4. Shop around using the Internet. Refer to updated consumer and market reports detailing the best banking services and interest rates available. Even archived news coverage might give you want you need.
5. Think alternatives. In general, the major banks offer low interest rates on savings accounts. Remember the credit unions and accounts at institutions outside of the six big banks. Also consider investment alternatives to which a working teen can contribute, like Canada Savings Bonds, GICs, and RESPs. ■

"Some kids think money is limitless, that you get it out of the bank machine, but I don't think they understand that you have to put money in there in the first place."

– Maura Drew-Lytle, Canadian Bankers Association

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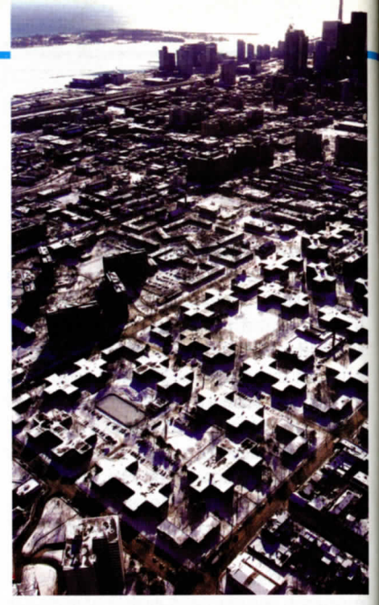
Community

Regent Park
RENAISSANCE

BY: Kristine Maitland



REGENT PARK HAS long had a reputation for being a war zone. Back in 1997, the improvisational world-beat group The Subtonic Monks tested their art therapy program on students from the area before taking it to war-torn Bosnia. Fast forward 10 years and the news stories still bode ill with tales of drug busts, shootings and poverty.

Regent Park's history has long been checkered: before building of the housing project began in 1948, the area was viewed as one of the worst slums in North America. And strangely, its history has also been riddled with social experimentation. When building began in 1948 — to conclude in 1959 — the idea was to create a modern utopia of sorts; inward looking, full of gardens and free of cars.

But the reality worked out somewhat differently. As Toronto Mayor David Miller reflected in 2005, "Regent Park became isolated from its neighbours. Its housing stock and infrastructure are badly in need of repair and the community itself became cut off from many of the benefits of the surrounding area."

And so came a call to action and, with it, the Regent Park Revitalization plan bearing a vision of a mixed-income, mixed-use neighbourhood. Along with the rebuilding of the 2,087 rent-geared-to-income units, the new project will construct market-rate units, including 500 affordable-ownership units. Also hot off the press is news of a new indoor swimming pool.

But if one looks carefully at Regent Park, one soon discovers that the original plan was not a total failure. Regent Park may be isolated, but it is also tight-knit. With a film festival, an innovative media arts program and a world-class music school, along with a housing and commercial development project in full swing, Regent Park has the makings for being one of Toronto's most important, albeit currently underground, urban culture locales.

In a city known for its plethora of film fests, it should be of no surprise that the Regent Park Film Festival, at Nelson Mandela Park School, is in its fifth year. Its mandate: to show films from whence Regent Park residents came, be it Regent Park itself, the West Indies, Africa or Pakistan.

Of course, the biggest challenge posed is getting residents to attend films from cultures other than their own. Regent Park is, as RPFF Director Karin Hazé notes "more mosaic rather than café au lait."

But Hazé thinks big. As a means to get more people to attend, she wants RPFF to feature more than films, in keeping with what she has seen at Afrofest. For now, RPFF is beginning its call for submissions for 2007.

The Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre is sure to be submitting. Established in 1989, as part of a provincial government initiative and sponsored by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Focus is a media oasis. Here, "marginalized and culturally diverse youth living in and around the community" are given free access and training in the use of all means of media technology."

One cannot help but be in awe of the work created by the local youth: Regent ParkTV, podcasts, a print magazine, digital photography, graphic arts, film — you name it, they have it (you can find it all at www.catchdaflava.com). In this way, Regent Park youth are able to express themselves artistically.

But Focus is not the only arts avenue for Regent Park's young people. There is also the Regent Park School of Music. As one walks from studio to studio one can feel the history in the many pianos, all donated to the school.

It is a history that music teacher/board member Thompson Egbo-Egbo knows intimately: he himself was a prodigy of the school, who at one point played piano for the Prince of Wales. Music at the school is "escape for some children… [it's] the only time some students get attention from an adult."

So important are these festivals and programs, it is not surprising that the revitalization is viewed with some unease. For Adonis Huggins, project co-ordinator of Focus, the biggest concern is space — the building in which Focus is currently housed will be demolished in 2009 and is it not known were it will end up next — or whether the program will have to pay market rent.

"One of the ideas," says Huggins, "was to build a cultural centre, to be a hub for cultural activities in the community, but no one has committed to that."

Hazé, however, is undeterred. She has met with Huggins recently and likely will be banging at the door of the Music School as well. She seems determined to have a centre in place. Says Haze, "Can you imagine Regent Park with all that (media arts) stuff and a movie theatre? That's what I want to see." ■

Pssssssssssst...

One woman's take on the black man's pickup BY: Dainty Smith

NOW THAT THE sun has come out and decided to stay a while, short skirts, tank tops and cute sandals are the typical dress-down style for girls on the go. Walking down Yonge Street, I am feeling like my mojo is in full effect. I'm looking and feeling good.

Then, suddenly, I hear it: "Pssssssssssssssst."

I ignore the familiar sound and keep walking, hoping that my message will get across. But again I hear the high pitched blast aimed at me.

"Psssssssssssssssst — can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Pssssssssst — shortie, where you going? What, you don't wanna talk to me?"

Now by not responding, I only appear as though I think I'm too good for some brotha to try and talk to me. Every woman I know, regardless of her ethnic background has been on the receiving end of the standard B.M.P. (Black Man's Pickup), which can only be described as a loud, lewd and disgusting animal call. The B.M.P is so common, it is a generally known fact that many black men, when trying to get a woman's attention, will try and attract a woman through an increasing loud series of long and loud "Pssssssssssssst!" sounds.

Now, I'm curious as to why any man would think that this catcalling technique has any shot of attracting a woman. The idea that you could call a woman in the same way that you would call a pet seems utterly ridiculous. Even worse is the assumption that the woman will also feel complimented by such an insulting action.

At the root of this is a serious problem that isn't being addressed; young black men are attempting to define themselves through the misogynist actions that they see in rap videos, movies and on TV. Young men in their early teens and 20s are going through one of the most significant periods of development in their lives, and while they are busy shaping their identity, the way in which they regard women is vitally important. On the flip side, women who are victims of this degrading behaviour also feel the negative impact.

"I don't appreciate having some stranger calling me like I'm his cat or dog," one woman says. "We have enough problems with general society and people like Don Imus, thinking and treating us like we're 'nappy-headed hos' — we don't need that from brothers in our own community."

The bottom line is that we women find being hissed at demeaning, insulting and just plain annoying, and we all know that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. ■

Refine Your pickup

We asked around the office, and here are a few things that can land you in her good graces — or in a heap of trouble.

Dos:

DO SMILE: It's the easiest thing, but most men don't realize that's it's the best first step to getting woman's attention.

DO BE POLITE: Practice a little thing called humility — your mother was right to make you practice your manners.

DO START WITH A NICE COMPLIMENT: You'll be amazed at how far something as simple as "you look really nice today" will get you.

DO BE GENUINE: Women can see fakeness a mile away.

DO BE A GENTLEMAN: If she's not interested that doesn't mean her pretty friend may not be.

Don'ts:

DON'T USE CATCALLS!!!: Whether from your car, the bus or a seat in the barbershop, do not Pssssssssssst! Seriously, has that ever worked?

DON'T GRAB HER HAND: When you see a pretty girl walking by on the street or in a club don't grab her hand. It's presumptuous, rude and kind of creepy.

DON'T BE AGGRESSIVE: Women are more likely to feel intruded upon when they are approached by a too-persistent guy.

DON'T FOLLOW THE PACK: When you're with your friends, you come off as a pack of wolves, and that can be very intimidating to woman who is by herself. Also, you're less likely to put on a macho front if your boys aren't there.

After-school safehaven

Community centres broaden life choices for Toronto's inner-city kids

BY: Ken Skinner

Community

MY DAUGHTER RECENTLY turned nine and already we're booking appointments with her. She has a full agenda. As parents, we've been lucky that we have time to ensure that her friends, family and school can be the focus of her world. Thankfully, ours is not the bleak world of the evening news, full of violent imagery, conflict and death.

But what about children whose parents both work, or work late? Is there a safety net to catch them before they are too much older or, worse, before they fall through the cracks? Studies have shown that more than 38 per cent of 9 to 13-year-olds are alone while their parents work, and many have the responsibility of raising their other siblings. Video games and the computer have replaced the after-school ball game and organizations like Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are seeing reduced numbers.

What lies in store for future generations when gunplay, gangs and other phenomena among youth are on the rise? Recent events in Virginia, Columbine and Montreal show how unchecked emotions can turn tragic. It does not happen overnight; there is a gestation period. But when individuals withdraw without close friends or a strong support system in place, subtle changes in demeanor can go unnoticed.

Christine Haladay, who teaches at Nelson Mandela school, says, "The signs are not always so easy to read in average classroom situations.... Bulging classrooms do not always give you a chance to know the students in depth, making it almost impossible to assess the potential risks that lurk in the shadows."

The good news is that there are solutions and it is up to us to invest individual time and effort to become the village that raises the child. After-school programs help bridge the gap. Children who attend after-school programs are less likely to use drugs or become teen parents and show improved school attendance and performance.

The Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre (CCAC) has for almost three decades, developed challenging programs for children in the Regent Park area. Founded in 1979 by David Blackmore, it became a registered charity in 1985 with a mandate to nurture positive attitudes, encourage social skills, build self-esteem and broaden life choices for children and youth in Toronto's inner city.

The CCAC offers classes in various forms of vocal and instrumental music, drama, visual art, dance, karate and help with homework. It serves as a great social meeting place for kids as well, a place to make friends outside of their immediate schools.

Executive director Carolyn Popvic notes, "As a community centre, we work mostly with families with more than one child registered here, are new to Canada, headed by single parents, and those who fall below the poverty line. Approximately 85 per cent of our students come from families with an annual income of less than $20,000 per year. Many of the parents have a low level of English and work evenings to support their families." These are not families neglecting their children; they are doing everything possible to keep the family together. "I believe that high-quality music and art education should be available to all regardless of religion, race or income. At the CCAC, we provide a safe haven for kids to come and learn and receive personal instruction at least once a week." The CCAC offers all this to children free when necessary.

Popvic is always raising funds for the centre, and recently secured a $20,000 donation from the Kiwanis Club for much-needed musical instruments. The teachers could make more money giving private lessons, but make the sacrifice for these kids. Teachers like Jim Heineman have been there since the centre opened its doors.

Snooky Tynes, who has worked at the centre with his wife Odessa for some years, heads a band with four of his own children and knows the importance of the CCAC and getting kids involved in activities. "Kids need things to do, they need to be challenged and, when they're also having fun, what they learn stays with them." Making a difference is important to Snooky, who has loaned his talents to many charitable events and taken the centre's message with him wherever he is. The family that plays together stays together, and you don't have to start a band to achieve it, you simply have to get involved. ■

Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre, 454 Parliament Street, 416-925-7222. www.cabbagetownarts.org.

Looking for a great after-school program?

Investigate these options

Belka Enrichment Centre
445 Sentinel Road, 416-744 3430. belka_enrichmentc@mail.caglomissions.org.

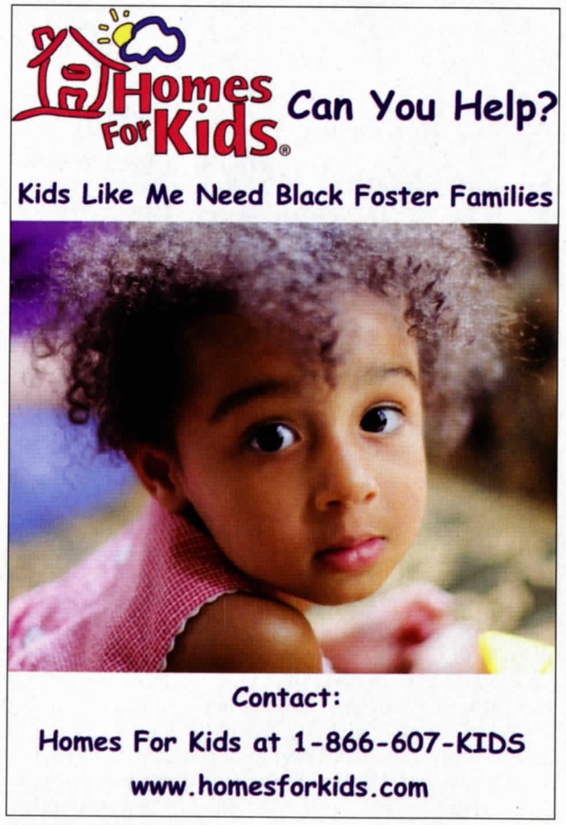
Belka Enrichment Centre is a non-profit agency providing after-school programs dedicated to academic achievement for low-income and at-risk children, encouraging them to become active, involved members of society. Belka serves as a safe haven in which children grades K-8 can obtain homework assistance, mentoring, friendship, and above all, protection from the dangers and negative influences they encounter in their daily lives. All services are free.

Regent Park Learning Centre
417 Gerrard Street East, 2nd floor. www.dixonhall.org/CE&D.html

The Regent Park Learning Centre is for residents in the Dixon Hall catchment area, with a focus on Regent Park, Moss Park and River Oak Co-op. They help adults to read, write and learn math. It is a place where adults and children can develop their computer skills. It also helps them to feel good about themselves and to know their rights.

University Settlement Recreation Centre
23 Grange Road Toronto, 416-598-3444. www.usrc.ca.

More expensive than the others, but it offers a greater variety of organized events and activities. There is a pool, gymnasium, equipped music department, daycare and many more services.



New Attitude

Fefe Dobson embraces a fresh look, a new sound and a different approach to her personal life BY: Del Cowie

FEFE DOBSON BREEZES into the downtown Toronto offices of Chris Smith Management in a turquoise summer dress, sunglasses and sandals. While her attire seems entirely appropriate for the season, one wouldn't associate it with the rock style of her past.

"My personal style's changed," says 22-year old Dobson. "I'm not really into studded belts anymore. I love bohemian styles and heels."

Last year she was getting ready to drop her sophomore album *Sunday Love*, featuring collaborations with the likes of Joan Jett and Nina Gordon of famed indie rockers Veruca Salt. If you don't remember it, it's because *Sunday Love* was never released.

Just before the album was due to come out, Dobson was dropped by her label Island Def Jam over budgets and musical differences. "At first, I was mad. Why me?" says Dobson. "Why now? This is the best record I've ever done!'" However, she now views the shelving of the record as a blessing. "*Sunday Love* was an angry record; that was a time when I hated everybody. My black eyeliner was all the way down to here," she says, tracing a finger across her cheek. "I was like, grrrrr! I was mad. I'm kind of happy it didn't come out." The experience has clearly left Dobson ready to embrace a new artistic direction and attitude. "I think those songs would have been bigger in 2003 than now," says Dobson, referring to the year her self-titled debut — yielding hits like "Bye, Bye Boyfriend" and "Everything" — was released. "I think we're at a point where that's not working any more. People want to dance, they want to feel good."

Dobson's new attitude is reflected in the approach to the making of her untitled third album, tentatively scheduled for a Fall release. "I'm trying to do things different, change it up," she says. "I've been really inspired by The Doors and Timbaland's records. I want people to be like 'Damn!' when they hear it. Not like, 'Oh, that was cool.'" Dobson has the advantage of being under the umbrella of Chris Smith Management, which successfully negotiated Nelly Furtado's image makeover.

"This record has a lot of soulful vocals, there's some crazy beats, [but] there's still rock guitar on there." While Dobson promises more "vocal gymnastics," she won't be emulating the Celine Dion and Mariah Carey songs she sang as a child.

However, she does hope it will end the comparisons to other artists that have cropped up in the past. "I'm glad [Avril Lavigne] came out with her record first, because I don't want to do that," Dobson says with a quick laugh. "And we're so different, even now. It's actually because we were so compared at the beginning, there was a reason, we sounded similar in a lot of ways. Now, we're both at the same age and I had time away and she kind of did her thing and got married ... it will be interesting to see what people say." Dobson says she and Lavigne share a mutual respect for each other. However, when I broach the subject of the chorus of Lavigne's single, "Girlfriend," something Dobson fans on the internet have charged was inspired by "Get You Off" from the scrapped *Sunday Love*, she's clearly aware of the rumour. "I'm not sure, but people will hear it sooner or later," she says. "But I had 'Hey, hey! You you!' first," she says laughing. "It's all good, though. Everything happens for a reason."

"At the beginning I wasn't comfortable with my skin. I didn't really know where I was and I didn't really take in my black side, so it was tough for me when I was younger."

The process of working with Jon Levine, known for his work with the Philosopher Kings and Jacksoul, has made her more introspective in her music and in her life as a whole. "At the beginning I wasn't comfortable with my skin. I didn't really know where I was and I didn't really take in my black side, so it was tough for me when I was younger, 'cause I was like, 'I wanna make music. I don't wanna have hip-hop beats 'cause then I'll be categorized.' Now I just want to make good music. I am who I am; you see a coloured woman and I'm proud of that. But for a long time I couldn't come to grips with that. My father's black, my mom is white, and she never really taught me to understand that I was beautiful for what I looked like."

Clearly everything from Dobson's style, music and her personal life have undergone significant change since she first emerged on the scene at 18. Today, she enthusiastically embraces the challenge of constant evolution. "I think that there was a time where people always asked the question, 'Who is she? One minute she's this, one minute, she's that.' But," says Dobson, "I change like anybody else; everybody is trying to find themseves and it doesn't make me an impossible person because I am searching for that." ■

Music to Our Ears!

BY: Jon Sarpong

6:45AM...TIME TO FACE another day, and although you'd much rather be skipping work and hitting the beach, you've got deadlines that won't disappear. What does *Sway* suggest? Wake up with **Kelly Rowland** (Ahhhhhh...who wouldn't want to?) and some high-energy tunes from *Ms. Kelly*, the sophomore release from the **Destiny's Child** "survivor". *Like This*, the jubilant collabo-single, which marks the return of **Eve** to the charts, is sure to make any morning a little more bearable. Just don't get stuck in the "Ghetto" with Ms. K and **Snoop** — the fumes from the Doggfather's "cigarettes" could make anyone just a little too tired to get out of bed...In the Office...**9:06am**... Only 29 minutes until your first Tim Horton's break and you are in definite need of some music to help pass the time. Mellow out with some pop-oriented grooves from number one island bad girl **Rihanna** and her most recent offering *Good Girl Gone Bad*. Since you've got your buds on, don't be afraid to pump up feel-good tracks like *Don't Stop the Music* and *Umbrella*, featuring the jigga man himself, **Jay-Z**....**12:32pm**...You hit the gym. This calls for a hip-hop assault as you show that elliptical who's boss! Set your Ipod on repeat as you jam to **Fabolous**' latest *From Nothin' to Somethin'*, which features blazin' production from **Swizz Beats**, Reefa and Big Tank; as well as guest appearances from **Junior Reid**, **Keyshia Cole**, **Lil' Mo** (yeah she's back!), and **Young Jeezy**.... **5:06pm**...You've finally moved out that mountain of files. So why not host a little after-work mixer? And what goes better with food, friends and a few margaritas than some R&B to set the night right? Check out **Mario** on *GO!*, a solid and stylish sophomore CD from the musician/actor. The album includes tracks written by **Ne-Yo, Johnta Austin, Akon** and **Pharrell** with production by **Stargate, Scott Storch, Dre & Vidal, Mr. Collipark**, and **Timbaland**. **11:49pm**... Another day done. But don't mess up those satin sheets before a few tracks from "Mr. Bump and Grind" himself — Yes, **R. Kelly** had just enough time between court appearances to release *Double Up*, the latest in a long line of club/bedroom hybrids. ■

Q&A RHEA

BY: Nick Aveling

IF YOU HAVEN'T heard of Rhea Dummett, chances are you will soon. The 22-year-old Guyana-born, Ajax, Ont.-bred, New York-based singer, known simply as Rhea to her fans, is the definition of unsigned hype.

She has two singles — "It's Yours" and "Get Me Home" featuring Kardi – in rotation on Flow 93.5 FM. She's worked with 8Ball & MJG and Keith Sweat. And to top it all off, she received perhaps the ultimate seal of mainstream approval when her song "Come & Get It" was featured in a Diet Pepsi commercial in the 2006 Super Bowl. What's next?

Describe your music for people who haven't heard it.

My music is R&B with flava. I listen to various genres of music, including jazz, so I also have a jazz influence in my tone. I want my music to be a representation of all that I am.

What are you working on now? Any progress in finding a label?

I'm writing and recording new songs, and I recently came back from a tour in Germany, Barbados, Guyana and the Cayman Islands. I'm also going to be hitting up Toronto again soon! And I'm in talks with some labels right now — it's all about timing.

Your music recently afforded you the opportunity to go back to Guyana for the first time since leaving as a child. Can you describe what that experience meant to you?

Going back to Guyana was truly a memorable and life changing experience. There's a saying along the lines of "you don't know where you're going until you know where you came from." Now I really feel like I know where I came from. I know the people, I've seen the land and I ate the food. I'll always be proud to be Guyanese.

You've led a relatively nomadic life, moving from Guyana to Ajax, then studying at the Berklee College of Music in Boston before moving to New York City. Where does Canada fit in to how you've developed as an artist?

Canada will always be my foundation. Moving to Boston for school and then NYC to pursue music was a natural progression but my family is still in Toronto. It's very important for me to have a fan base in my hometown and do shows there on a regular basis. I also feel that my development as an artist has been affected by being from Canada because it makes work even harder — there's a lot of competition out here and I know that coming from where I come from and being in New York without my family means working even harder to achieve my dreams.

Visit myspace.com/rheasings for info on upcoming shows, or check Rhea's blog at retvrealityshow.com.

Music

DOING THE DIVA THANG...

Canadian songstress Deborah Cox shows off her jazzy side with her latest album BY: Jon Sarpong

SUSTAINED BY A voice of intense power, depth, and clarity, Canadian music icon Deborah Cox has managed to achieve long-term commercial and creative success in an industry that's constantly in search of 'the next big thing.' With the release of her fourth studio recording, *Destination Moon*, Cox makes her foray into the jazz genre and pays tribute to vocalist Dinah Washington. *Sway* caught up with the award-winning singer while on a promotional tour in Los Angeles.

What's the biggest difference between the music industry now and when you were coming up?

It's such a cookie-cutter business now. They're just kind of sending out the same type of artist; everybody is the same. Back when I was coming up, it was all about being original. I don't think there is as much artist development

What do you think about the Canadian music scene and innovations like *Canadian Idol*?

I think the scene has developed quite a bit. If you want to get into music or the arts, there are so many options available. In terms of things like *Canadian Idol*, I think it has definitely made things simpler and easier for emerging talent, but in the long run it will be harder for them because they won't have enough tutelage in the performance aspect of things... They're like deer in headlights. You see the fear, the inexperience and awkwardness. They are thrown up there with no amour — I really feel for them.

Destination Moon is your first studio album in over four years. What made you want come out with a jazz CD that pays tribute to Dinah Washington?

Well, I wanted to do it because I knew that I could do it. I just wanted to set myself apart from all of the distractions that are happening musically right now. I wanted to go back to a time that was really inspiring for me and introduce people to a woman who was an incredible songstress who has inspired me. It would have been predictable to do Ella or Billie. I really feel that Dinah is just as great; I see a lot of myself in her.

A lot of people find jazz music inaccessible and therefore don't enjoy it on a regular basis. What can people expect from you on this CD?

I'm trying to do my small part and introduce my fans to this great music and to promote this genre. People who listen to my dance music will be completely, and I hope pleasantly, surprised. I think it is up to artists to create music that we believe in and to promote that music through records, tribute albums, etc. I'm actually hoping to portray Dinah on film someday.

You've been a performer since you were 12 years old. Which young artists out there right now do you think will have longevity in the music industry?

I think Beyoncé will have real longevity. She's a singer, songwriter and business woman — I think she has great vocals and understands what it takes to endure in this industry. The next choice might surprise people, being that I just did a jazz album, but I think Avril Lavigne will be around for a very long time. She seems to have a really good sense of herself, even though she is so young. ■

Spotlight: ROBERT GLASPER

BY: Jon Sarpong

FORGET EVERYTHING YOU think you know about jazz. With his latest release, *In My Element*, Houston native Robert Glasper redefines the limits of the genre with an emotionally charged journey through contemporary musicology. Joined by comrades Vincente Archer and Damion Reid, Glasper's piano creates a lush sonic landscape that unassumingly enchants its listener.

The trio draws heavily from its panoramic musical tastes, infusing the language of jazz into contemporary music from artists, including electro-rockers Radiohead and legendary hip-hop producer J-Dilla. Stand out selections include an imaginative reworking of the Sam Rivers composition "Beatrice" and "Y'outta Praise Him," a gospel-infused cut that references Glasper's gospel background. With a growing fan base and ever engaging musical appeal, Robert Glasper is poised to soar into the exclusive company of jazz music's most elite artists.

OPRAH VS. HIP-HOP

BY: Nick Aveling

SHE'S ONE OF the most influential women alive. She gives away cars the way most people give away germs (plentifully and to strangers). She's beefed with 50 Cent, Ludacris, Ice Cube and Snoop.

Now that's gangsta.

So gangsta, in fact, that we at *Sway* got to thinking. Despite Oprah's better-than-angelic image, could she be more dangerous than the rappers she finds so offensive? Who's really more gangsta: Oprah or hip-hop?

Strength in numbers

If there's one thing hip-hop heads appreciate, it's rolling deep. The Wu-Tang Clan, for instance — with its vast network of members, affiliates and friends — actually outgrew its native Staten Island in last year's census. Similarly, Oprah's crew is best described as an army. And one look at whom she's rolling with — Dr. Phil, a fat man who sells weight-loss products, and Rachael Ray, the anti-Christ – proves beyond a doubt that Oprah Ain't Nuthing Ta F' Wit.

ADVANTAGE: Like the universe, Oprah's crew is probably finite on a large enough scale, but even the world's greatest minds can't be sure. Oprah wins.

Wildin' out

"Cross a line, eat a gram or two of saturated fat, splurge on something ridiculous," urged Oprah's website in May. Hold on to your monocles, people — Oprah's getting silly with it! Now, compare that lame attempt at being naughty to the requisite gram or two of something a little further over the line that's been the inspiration for a solid 50 per cent of hip-hop's entire catalogue.

ADVANTAGE: No contest. Hip-hop wins.

The canine question

Where my dogs at? It's a question even the gulliest of emcees must confront. Some, such as pit bull fanatic DMX and kennel owner Big Boi, take comfort knowing that when they ask The Question, they invariably get a single answer: we right here, dog. Oprah, too, knows where her dogs are. In 2005, The Big O welcomed three beautiful golden retriever puppies into her family — as if she didn't already have two cocker spaniels!

ADVANTAGE: Two cocker spaniels and three golden retrievers versus entire civilizations of ravenous pit bulls? That's like trying to swat a dragon with a rolled-up copy of *O Magazine*. Hip-hop wins.

The Stan factor

Rappers have made their fans do some abjectly dumb things over the years, no doubt (the Biggie and Tupac feud is filled with examples). But if Oprah declared war on Canada this very second we'd be neck-deep in RPG-toting soccer moms less than two hours from now — and half of them would be Canadian.

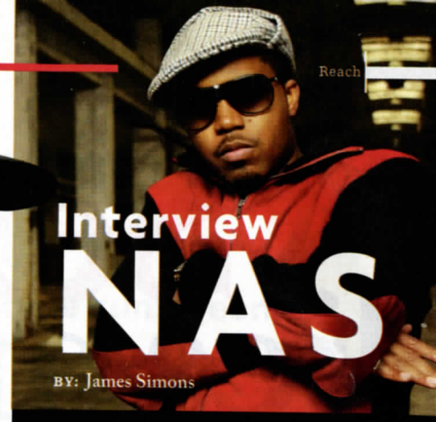
ADVANTAGE: It took the Heaven's Gate cult leaders decades to convince less than 40 people to join them on an intergalactic spaceship. Oprah could have 40 million at the Gates of Hell by noon tomorrow. Oprah wins.

Beefs

Ever since KRS-One waved "biddy-bye-bye" to Shan and Marl back in '87, battling has been a hip-hop rite of passage. The battle-rap is more or less the last vestige of true wit in North American popular culture. Except for Oprah! When James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* turned out to be fiction, Oprah flipped the script on some "Now ... I have a million little questions." Oh. Snap.

ADVANTAGE: This one could go either way, but given Oprah's capacity to air a chump like James Frey out on national TV (dude seriously looked like his soul was trying escape from his body and hide under the chair), Oprah narrowly wins.

In the final analysis, Oprah's actually more gangsta than the very gangstas she claims to oppose. You know what they say: real recognize real. ■



Interview NAS

BY: James Simons

SINCE THE MID-'90s heyday of Rotten Apple rap, Nas has remained one of hip-hop's most exciting stars, popularizing a Benz-and-a-backpack blend of consciousness and commercialism long before Kanye did it. On the phone from Baltimore, his responses are so self-assured, they could only come from one man.

You started your career on "Live at the Barbeque" by Main Source, a Toronto group. What's your relationship with the city?

It's like the Mecca for hip-hop over there in Canada. Toronto would be what I feel about New York: I feel more at home there than most places in Canada.

Growing up in the '80s in Queensbridge, do you remember seeing the greats around town?

I'd see Marley Marl, MC Shan; members of the Juice Crew would be in the neighbourhood. Then if you journeyed into Jamaica, Queens, you'd see DMC driving in a Cadillac or Cool J in a Wrangler Jeep. That was cool.

Given your role in hip-hop's evolution, do you get the respect you deserve?

Later on, I can look back at the credit and measure it, but as far as right now, what I get is plenty. Every day I feel good about life.

Who are the best rappers of all time?

You gotta do Pac. You gotta do Big. You gotta do KRS-One, Kool G Rap, Ice Cube....

It seems like you're not allowed to make that list without saying Biggie and Pac.

Yeah, people are scared. I do think that people gravitate towards Biggie, Pac and this and that, but I hope they know what they're saying and they know the depth of Tupac's music and the genius of Biggie's lyrics.

I hear you're filming a reality show.

It's documentary-style. You're not going to be in my bedroom. I just thought it would be good to step out more. I feel like I've always been in the shadows.

Books

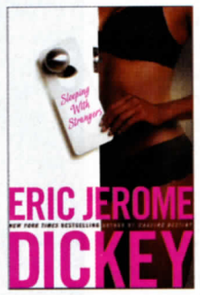
Sex, lies and comic books

Eric Jerome Dickey's **Urban Odyssey**

BY: Andrea Thompson

ERIC JEROME DICKEY took the scenic route on his way to becoming a bestselling author. At first glance, his path to success may seem haphazard and unlikely, but a closer look reveals a life that reads like a classic storyline of quest, adventure and return.

As a boy from a poorly educated working-class family in Memphis, Tennessee, Dickey's exposure to literature was minimal. In spite of this, the seeds of his future success as a novelist were planted during those early years through Dickey's love for stories about characters like Spiderman, the Hulk and Storm from the X-Men.



From his hotel room in San Diego, where he's winding down a tour promoting his book, *Sleeping with Strangers*, Dickey says, "I grew up on comic books, and what I do as a writer is an amalgamation of many things I've done before, whether it's reading comics or watching lots of films. It's all related to storytelling."

The pace of Dickey's own story as a writer quickened when he left Memphis for a job in L.A. as an aerospace software developer in the early '80s. "In L.A. there were so many avenues, venues, opportunities for storytellers." During this time, Dickey discovered his talents as an actor and stand-up comedian, and began to transfer what he knew about story structure and character development to the stage. A decade later, Dickey began working as a middle school teacher, and studying creative writing at UCLA, where his storytelling skills evolved once again from a focus on the stage to the page.

His breakthrough came with his first book *Sister, Sister*, published by Dutton of the Penguin publishing group in 1996. This debut hit number one on the Blackboard Bestsellers List, was featured in *Essence* magazine, and created a national fan base for Dickey's work. From there, he went on to write 14 more novels, including nine titles that appeared on the *New York Times* Bestseller List, and his two most recent books, *Sleeping with Strangers*, and the sequel, *Walking With Enemies* (to be released in August).

Eric Jerome Dickey's work is part of a growing wave of black erotic fiction in North America. "It's getting more popular because we've got books on the shelves. Years ago you could've been starving for black books; all you had to choose from was Jackie Collins or Danielle Steele."

While Dickey is grateful to be living in a time when there is more support for his work, he has no illusions about why the change occurred. "It's profitable. People don't make books because they like reading. People make books because they make money." For Dickey and other black authors, success came after years of knocking on doors. "These writers didn't come out of nowhere. People have been there; they just didn't have access. The gates were locked. I came along at a good time. There were people knocking long before I was. Pre-'94ish, outside of Baldwin and Hughes, what black guy had a book out in this genre? Stuff that would now be considered urban fiction-type stuff."

Urban fiction, contemporary fiction, street fiction — The whole issue of genre naming is loaded for Dickey. "People say urban, and I really have to ask you, what do you mean? Because, *Sex in the City* was an urban story. Urban just means big city, but for some reason when you say black urban it means ghetto." Labels like black fiction or African American fiction also contain subtext for him. "You don't see non-African American writers get an additional adjective," he says.

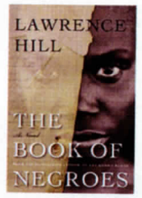
For the most part, Dickey leaves the issue of labels to the marketing strategists. "It's part of the business. Everyone's put in a box. Most writing is a combination of genres. Even when I did crime books, they made them sound like relationship books. Which isn't a bad thing. When you look at movies with Bogie and Bacall, they were crime movies, but they made it about Bogey and Bacall. *Casablanca* is about the war, patriotism, but it's got Ingrid Bergman and Bogey as former lovers, so it became a relationship thing."

Relationships are a common focus in Dickey's work. "No matter what I've written, even when I did stand-up comedy, it was about relationships." Although his work covers the range of human interaction, from the bond between mother and son, to the predatory relationship between a hit man and his mark, Dickey is most known for his explicitly erotic descriptions. "It's not just sex for the sake of sex." He explains: "Erotica attacks you from a psychological POV where you're into the minds of the characters." Dickey also recognizes that the large audience for this type of writing is a sign of the times. "People are very voyeuristic. Sex isn't as mysterious as it used to be. It's on the internet. I could go online and look at porn all day if I wanted to."

For Dickey, it's important that the stories he writes are grounded in the life his readers live. His characters discuss contemporary social and political issues, and struggle with their emotions. "They live in the real world. They're fictional characters, but they live in the world that I'm in." Perhaps because of that realism, readers often make the mistake of thinking that Dickey's writing is autobiographical, but he says, "I'm not interested in writing about myself." As for the story about the boy who loved comic books who grew up to be an aerospace engineer, who then became a stand-up comic, and later became a famous novelist? Last year he developed a six-issue miniseries of comic books for Marvel Enterprises, featuring his childhood heroes, the Black Panther and Storm. To some, this project may have seemed like a wild departure from his previous writing, but to Dickey, it was a way of going back home. ■

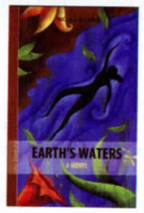
Sway's summer reading list

Someone pass us some sunscreen!



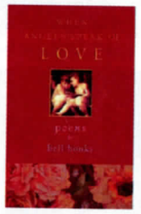
The Book of Negroes
Lawrence Hill
Harper Collins,
$34.95

Canadian author Lawrence Hill takes us on a journey of tragedy, hope and discovery through the eyes of Aminata Diallo, an 11-year-old child who is abducted from her village in West Africa and sent to live as a slave in South Carolina. Years later, she forges her way to freedom, serving the British in the Revolutionary War and registering her name in the historic *Book of Negroes*. This book, an actual document, provides a short, but immensely revealing record of freed Loyalist slaves who requested permission to leave the US for resettlement in Nova Scotia, only to find that the haven they sought was steeped in an oppression all of its own. This is one book that you won't be able to put down.



Earth Waters
Nicole Blades
DC Books
$19.95

Young, sea-loving Harriette Leacock — nicknamed Lily, after the floating flower — lives a lonely life with her mother, a stern, detached woman who in reality is her maternal grandmother. Harriette's only joy is her frequent trips to the sea, where she can escape the prison of boredom and mother's contempt. It is on the sun-soaked beach that the withdrawn, thoughtful Harriette finds precious stones, money, company—and Colvin Edwards. Quickly and almost unwittingly, Harriette enters into a relationship with the seemingly charismatic Colvin. But his involvement in a crime that rocks the island forces Harriette to make a decision: stay the shy, retiring flower or finally swim freely into her own destiny.

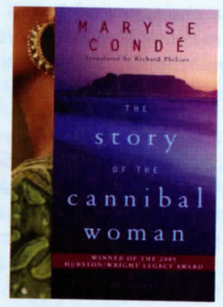


When Angels Speak of Love
bell hooks
Atria Books
$14.95

Although hooks is mainly known as a feminist thinker, her writings cover a broad range of topics on gender, race, teaching and the significance of media for contemporary culture. Her latest effort, *When Angels Speak of Love* offers insight into hooks' theories of love, and the short poems range in subject from the all-consuming fire of passion to lovers' cruelty to divine communion through surrender. A great read for a hot night.

what we're reading

The Story of the Cannibal Woman
Maryse Condé (Trans. Richard Philcox)
Atria Books, CDN $28.99



IN MARYSE CONDÉ'S *The Story of the Cannibal Woman* we are taken on a contemporary and international journey that follows the lives of Rosélie and Stephen, an interracial, intercultural couple, each living out their dreams. As they globetrot across countries and continents, we are given insight into the complex relationships that exist among races, classes and genders throughout the globe. One dark night in Cape Town, Stephen goes out for a pack of cigarettes and never returns. His murder sparks a series of events which leaves Rosélie with unanswered questions — and no means to support herself. Condé uses flashbacks to tell of Rosélie's childhood in Guadeloupe, her parents' unhappy marriage and her unsuccessful attempt at studying law in Paris (where she gets picked up in a cafe by a reggae singer, taken back to his family compound in Africa and dumped when he becomes his country's minister of culture and marries one of the president's daughters). At the urging of her housekeeper and best friend, the new widow decides to take advantage of the strange gifts she has always possessed and embarks on a career as a clairvoyant. As Rosélie builds a new life for herself and seeks the truth about her husband's murder, we are given a glimpse into the new South Africa and post–apartheid reality.

Film

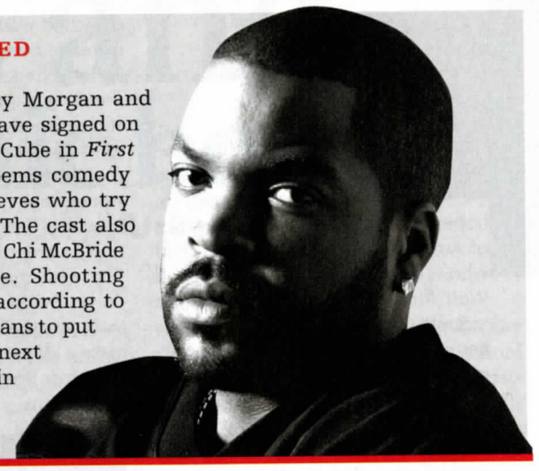
Hollywood hype

The buzz on the backlots

BY: Jon Sarpong

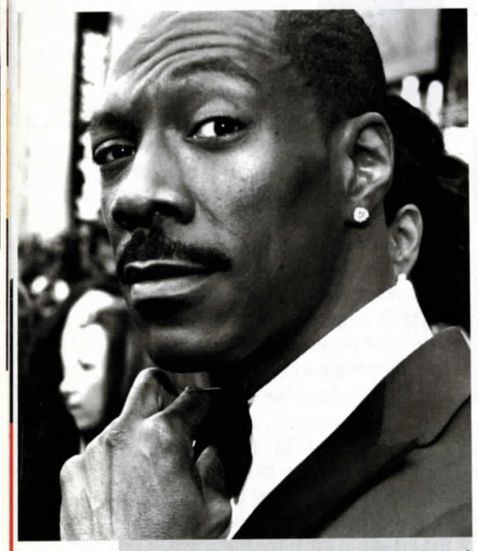
ICE CUBE HEADED FOR CHURCH

Katt Williams, Tracy Morgan and Malinda Williams have signed on to star opposite Ice Cube in *First Sunday*, a Screen Gems comedy about two petty thieves who try to rip off a church. The cast also includes Regina Hall, Chi McBride and Loretta Devine. Shooting began this month, according to Daily Variety, with plans to put the film in theatres next year during the Martin Luther King holiday weekend.



HALLE BERRY GOING BALD

Following in the footsteps of Natalie Portman, Sigourney Weaver, and, most recently, Britney Spears, Halle Berry revealed that she will be sporting a sleek and aerodynamic new look for her new film *Nappily Ever After*. In the film, Berry plays a woman that discovers her hair is falling out and decides to shave it off. As a result, she must deal with people's perceptions and how her hair defined her.



'FANTASY' FOR MURPHY

Eddie Murphy has signed on to star in Columbia Pictures' big-screen adaptation of *Fantasy Island*. Murphy will play multiple roles in the film, which is based on the popular TV series that ran from 1978-84 and starred Ricardo Montalban. Described as a family-oriented comedy, the project will be written by Jay Scherick and David Ronn, who most recently teamed with Murphy on *Norbit*.

JADEN SMITH LANDS SECOND FILM ROLE

Jaden Christopher Syre Smith, the eight-year-old son of Will and Jada Pinkett Smith, has been cast in his first feature film since debuting last year in his father's movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*. In the film *Newton's Law*, from Will Smith's Overbrook Entertainment shingle under Columbia, the younger Smith will play a bright and talented young inventor who gets trapped in a science centre during his class field trip.

DON CHEADLE IN CONVERSATION STARTER

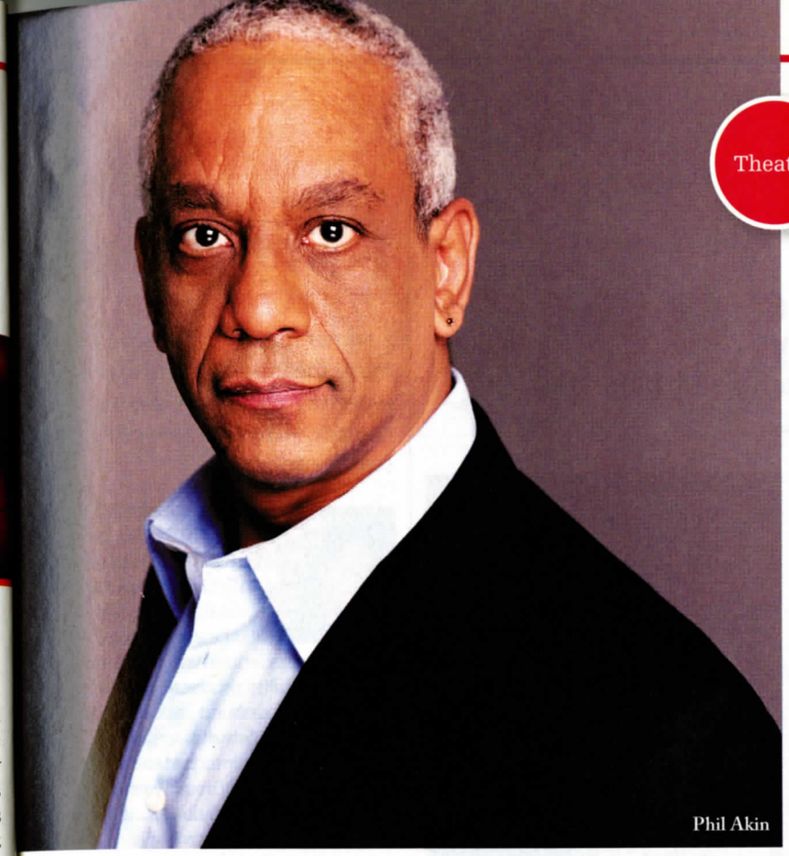
Look out for *Talk to Me* an engaging pseudo-biography starring Don Cheadle and Chiwetel Ejiofor. The film centres on the real-life story of Ralph Waldo "Petey" Green (Cheadle), an ex-con who courted controversy at a white-owned radio station and became an iconic Washington-area on-air personality in the 1960s. Ejiofor will play Dewey Hughes, producer of Green's show.

WHITAKER TAKING A 'POWDER'

Oscar winner Forest Whitaker and Jessica Biel are set to star in the inspirational drama *Powder Blue*. *Blue* follows a suicidal ex-priest (Whitaker), a stripper (Biel) with a terminally ill son, an elderly ex-con seeking to reunite with his daughter and a lovelorn mortician whose lives intersect in Los Angeles on Christmas Eve. Timothy Linh Bui wrote and directs the film, which begins shooting on location in July. Whitaker will also co-produce.

Courtesy of blackflix.com

Theatre



Phil Akin

Exploring the other

A season of outcasts and misfits at Stratford

BY: Sarah B. Hood

THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL is renowned for its Shakespearean productions, but some of this year's most intriguing offerings are by other authors. In his final season as artistic director, Richard Monette has chosen to explore the theme of the "other" in society, with a lineup of plays that feature characters at odds with the society they live in.

On the roster of productions is *To Kill A Mockingbird*, a stage adaptation of the novel by Harper Lee about racism and justice in 1930s Alabama. There's also a stage version of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, about the struggle of Depression-era migrant workers to maintain their humanity. Also, Graham Greene (Oscar-nominated for 1990's *Dances With Wolves*) is playing the difficult role of Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, while Phil Akin, artistic director of Obsidian Theatre, is taking on the equally challenging title role in *Othello*.

For Akin, a veteran Toronto performer who was nominated for a Dora Award for his work in last year's *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* in Toronto, the Stratford experience is a new one. Not least, he says, because he's working alongside some company members who've literally been with the festival for decades. "Lucy Peacock, who's in *Othello*, is in her 51st show here. This is my first," he says.

Besides Othello, Akin is also playing the pivotal role of Crooks in *Of Mice and Men*. One might imagine that playing the jealous Moor — one of the greatest tragic roles in English-language theatre — might present more difficulties than the relatively small part ("four-and-a-half pages of text: that's all") in *Of Mice and Men*. However, says Akin, "It's funny; Shakespeare does 75 per cent of the work for you, once you understand it and get out of the way. You don't need to go much further than the news to see how jealousy plays its way today, and for as little cause."

However, he continues, "For some reason the language that Steinbeck wrote is really difficult to commit to memory. The grammar is not always correct, so you find yourself trying to correct it, and that's wrong. It has its own particular cadence and rhythm, and sometimes it's hard to find how it hooks up to the next line. I was able to memorize all of *Othello*, and I ended up spending two complete days trying to work on *Of Mice and Men*."

Of course, the role of Othello presents other challenges. "There seems to be an easy route that you can track: he gets jealous and goes nuts," says Akin. "What we've been working very hard on is this idea of him not appearing to show how far he's gone. There's a duality, a war that's going on within him that continues right through the play."

For the audience, says Akin, "This has to be a play about real people, and if we don't care about everybody in the show as a real person, it doesn't work."

Othello runs from June 2 to September 22, and *Of Mice and Men* runs June 21 to September 22, both at the Tom Patterson Theatre in Stratford. Already running are *Oklahoma!*; *My One and Only*; *King Lear*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *To Kill A Mockingbird*; *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Blonde, The Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead*. Later openings include *Shakespeare's Will* (which begins previews June 23); A *Delicate Balance* (July 29); *An Ideal Husband* (July 31); *The Odyssey by Derek Walcott* (July 27), and *Pentecost* (August 3). Some productions run as late as November. 800-567-1600, www.stratfordfestival.ca. ■

Ethnosonic

Weyni Mengesha brings sounds of blackness to Toronto theatres

BY: Chania Bailey

WEYNI MENGESHA OPENS the door and shares a small smile. She explains that she has just had her wisdom teeth pulled explaining her slightly swollen cheeks. Despite the pain, she's in high spirits, and the young dramaturge's reputation as a perennially positive person proves its worth.

A Vancouverite of Ethiopian descent, Mengesha is a director, actor and composer, currently completing a two-year residency at the Soulpepper Theatre Company. Her parents left Ethiopia in the '70s at the time of the revolution, and as she relaxes at the table, she shares a unique fact about Canadians in her age group with Ethiopian roots.

"There aren't many children who are older than me that were born in Canada, who are Ethiopian; she reveals "They had just started emigrating when I was born."

When Mengesha was 15 her family moved to Toronto. Aspects of this transition were surprising to the young woman, as during the time that she lived in Vancouver there was not a large West Indian or African population. It was only when Mengesha came to Toronto that she was confronted with the colour caste system.

"When I moved to Toronto in grade 10 all of a sudden I would hear 'light-skinned' people would say 'oh she thinks she's so this and that', and I'm like what, what is this thing? It's a major part of culture in other places," Mengesha says. "There is a lot of violence and verbal abuse that happens to dark-skinned people. That was definitely new for me, coming to Toronto."

After arriving in the city and completing her studies at York University, Mengesha was drawn into the world of theatre and music, and soon found herself composing scores for renowned theatrical presentations. Mengesha composed and directed the music for the internationally-acclaimed production of *Da Kink In My Hair* and, through her work and thoughts, her belief that music touches on the spiritual root of humanity is clear. "There is something in that intersection of that perfect note and the poetry, the way the song is written, that creates magic and people respond to that because it calls them. There is something that's higher than us, there's something that transcends and you have to believe in it," she reveals.

For Mengesha, her work is all about making a difference and bringing change to the lives of others, especially young people, through art. She hopes that, through her work, others will be given the opportunity to explore the journey of life.

"I want to leave a legacy for the generations to come," she says through her broad smile. "I want those following me not to have to be placed in situations of self-loathing. Instead, I want them to get on stage, dream and tell new stories." ■

Classics to cabaret: the Toronto theatre season

Summer may be off-season for many theatres, but festivals and repertory companies are hot choices. Here are some of this season's top picks:

Dream in High Park

CanStage began their Dream in High Park outdoor summer theatre series in 1983, garnering huge, enthusiastic audiences with their quality productions and long history of colour-blind casting. They celebrate their 25th anniversary with a fresh and modern interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a Caribbean twist. Starring Jujube Mandiela and directed by ahdri zhina mandiela. June 26 to Sept. 2. Tue-Sun 8pm. Gates open 6pm. PWYC/$20 suggested; under-14s free. High Park. 416-367-8243. www.canstage.com

Soulpepper:

In the Distillery District, Soulpepper Theatre has nabbed one of Toronto's brightest young stars this summer: author, performer and dub poet d'bi.young.anitafrika. Catch her in *Time of Your Life* by William Saroyan, set in 1930s San Francisco (July 4-Aug. 11) and Chekhov's classic *Three Sisters* (Aug. 30-Sept. 29). Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 55 Mill Street, Building 49. 416-866-8666, www.soulpepper.ca.

Fringe Festival:

From July 4-15, the Fringe of Toronto theatre festival turns the Annex neighbourhood into a theatrical free-for-all with dozens of productions at $10 a piece. Intriguing choices include Leon Saul's *Curse of Ham*, about a charismatic preacher who believes he is Ham, the cursed son of Noah and so-called "father of the black race." Also, the always-eye-opening Donald Carr contributes a children's show titled *Anansi — How Come You Smart So?* Various venues. 416-966-1062, www.fringetoronto.com

Ask Xania

The Real Jerk

DEAR XANIA:

I'M A VIBRANT *thirty-something-year-old woman of Barbadian/Trinidadian background and I love my food. Even though I was born in Canada, my parents raised me on West Indian dishes. Growing up, we rarely dined in restaurants. Instead, we would make it a family affair of aunts, uncles and cousins who would bring food over, eat, drink and hang out. My mother taught me everything she knew about spices and the fine art of island cooking, which I believe to be one of my best qualities. Here's the thing. I've been dating this cute Canadian man who loves spicy women, but not so much the food. Every time I cook for him, he complains that the food is too hot or picks at it wondering "what is this?" When we go out for dinner, he always selects restaurants where the food is bland and boring. I can't help but to feel hurt when he disses my dishes. How can I find a happy medium in cooking for my man, maintaining my Caribbean flavor and serving up something he won't complain about?*

Flying Fish and Potatoes

DEAR FLYING FISH & POTATOES:

What you have here is a clash of cultural palates. You can neither expect your cute Canadian to adapt overnight to your cultural ways, nor can you do the same with his. You were raised on hot and spicy and he on boring and bland. It's obvious your cultured cooking is too much for him to handle — all at once. Ease him in by mixing dishes and come up with your own recipes by merging what your mom taught you with food you know he likes. Curry up some potatoes, put a little seasoning in the chicken, but serve it with plain rice instead of rice and peas. Avoid the heavy hand on spices so you don't burn off his mouth. Include him in the cooking process so he can taste-test as you go along. As for restaurant dining, together, explore new ethnic restaurants in the city. There's more than just Canadian and Caribbean cuisine.

DEAR XANIA:

MY BOYFRIEND AND *I have been together for more than a year and our first trip together was to Jamaica. I was really looking forward to going home to see my family and exposing him to my culture. After we checked into our hotel, I was horrified to discover his "vacation" ways. This man was truly unruly. He treated the island like a playground to carry on foolishly. He would get disgustingly drunk, make fun of the dialect and embarrass me in front of my family. The real clincher happened when we were sunbathing on the beach. He had left to get us some cocktails and was gone for about an hour. Upon his return, all I could hear from down the beach was some guy yelling out to everyone "hey mon", "wha ah gwan, mon" and he was wearing a horrid dread wig on his head. I can't tell you how shocked and disrespected I felt. I cried. He thought I was overreacting, I don't think I was. When we got back home, I broke up with him. Do you think I was too harsh?*

Poised with Pride

DEAR POISED WITH PRIDE:

No sweetheart, you were not too harsh. Actually, you were too nice. You actually stayed with him for the duration of your vacation? I would have left his behind high and dry and hung out with my family and left him to carry on with his disorderly conduct. I can't believe they still sell those dread wigs as souvenirs — it really is disrespectful to Rastafarians. Regardless, no love lost. He showed his true, childish and ignorant colours. I would explain to him how he not only disrespected you, but your Jamaican culture. I'm sorry he behaved like that while on vacation but at least you were exposed from early on as opposed to vacationing on your honeymoon. Can you imagine if he did that walking down the aisle?

Send your questions to xania@xaniaenterprises.com

The legacy of slavery

BY: Afua Cooper

IN 1807, BRITAIN officially ended its trade in enslaved Africans and brought to a close its 270-year involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. But by that time, it had emerged as the centre of the world's most powerful empire.

The wealth that Britain accrued from the slave trade was not lost on its citizens. One of them, the 18th century writer Malachy Postlethwayt, rightly claimed that the African slave trade "was the great pillar and support" of the British trade with America, and that the British Empire "was a magnificent superstructure of American commerce and [British] naval power on an African foundation."

Postlethwayt was correct — the profits that Britons accumulated from slavery were invested in diverse industries such as iron, cotton, steel and shipbuilding. Insurance companies, like Lloyd's of London, sprang up in order to insure slave ships and their human cargo. Barclays Bank, the Bank of England, and the ill-fated Barings Bank were established because of the wealth gained from slavery. British cities grew rich from the gains of the trade in African human beings. Every important British family, including the royal family, accrued part of its riches from slavery.

Oh... one more thing

In the tropical West Indian colonies, Jamaica in particular, it was slave-grown sugar that brought untold wealth to Britain. These colonies were the centre of the Empire and were worth more to Britain than all its other colonies combined. Over time, no fewer than 200 refineries were built throughout the British Isles, an activity that led to thousands of jobs. Slave-grown West Indian and American cotton also led to the creation of mills and powered the British manufacturing sector. The take-off of the iron, steel, and ship-building industries, too, owed much to slavery. One of the reasons there was so much opposition in the British parliament to the ending of the slave trade was that parliamentarians recognized the dependence of the British economy and sub-economies on it.

And yet the time came when both the slave trade and slavery were abolished. However, when slavery ended in the tropical colonies, the British Government compensated the slave owners to the tune of 20 million pounds; the enslaved, who had worked for three centuries giving their blood, sweat and lives to build Britain and the colonies, were given neither money nor an acre of land. They were given their "freedom" to make their own way. The slave owners were able to reassert their hegemony over almost every principal sector of the society and economy. The newly-freed and their descendants were disenfranchised through a racist property qualification that ensured they would be excluded from voting and holding political office. They had relatively little access to land (crucial for social advancement) as whites still controlled the overwhelming majority of good land. Draconian tax and criminal laws were enacted to keep blacks poor and "in their place." Blacks had to begin from scratch and the playing field was not level. That the newly freed people and their descendants survived was a miracle. And survive they did, while building new societies. After emancipation in the British Caribbean, for example, the newly freed people formed collectives and co-operatives, purchased properties (oftentimes mountainous, rocky and forested land), built towns and villages, schools, hospitals, roads and highways and, through their efforts, a modern Caribbean was born.

Yet the post-emancipation Caribbean emerged as a colonial state, still under Britain's thumb, ruled by Britons or their colonial underlings. The binary of white superiority/black inferiority still prevailed and the resources were still exploited and consumed by the white minority. The majority of blacks remained poor, in spite of their efforts to raise themselves. It was this poverty that forced tens of thousands to leave the Caribbean to seek greener pastures in South and Central America toward the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. They would later flock to the US, Britain and Canada.

Once in "first world" cities, the majority, even if they gained "good jobs," ended up facing unemployment and poverty. In Canada today, a greater proportion of blacks (both immigrant and indigenous) live below the poverty line than the rest of the population. In Toronto, in recent times, we have witnessed the rise of gun violence among African-Canadian youths. What is striking in the various mainstream news reports on the issue is the lack of analysis of the social and economic exclusion that some of these youths experience. Further, little mention is made of the very real anti-black racism in Canadian society. Thus, black economic and social disadvantage is one of the legacies of slavery. It was slavery that determined how blacks would be treated and how they would access opportunities long after its demise. Even after abolition, black skin remained a badge of dishonour, blocking entry into better-paying jobs.

In spite of our tremendous gains in the New World, so much more needs to be done to repair the damage. Blacks today still suffer from the consequences. Various apologies have been made by leaders of countries and institutions. But the time has come to give teeth to those apologies. It's time to compensate the descendants of the enslaved for the lingering impact of such a catastrophe.

Dr. Afua Cooper is a historian and author. Her latest book *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning Of Old Montréal* (HarperCollins, 2006; L'Editions de L'Homme, 2007) became a Canadian national bestseller and was nominated for the Governor General's Award.

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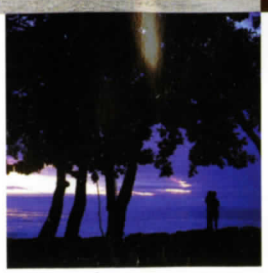

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